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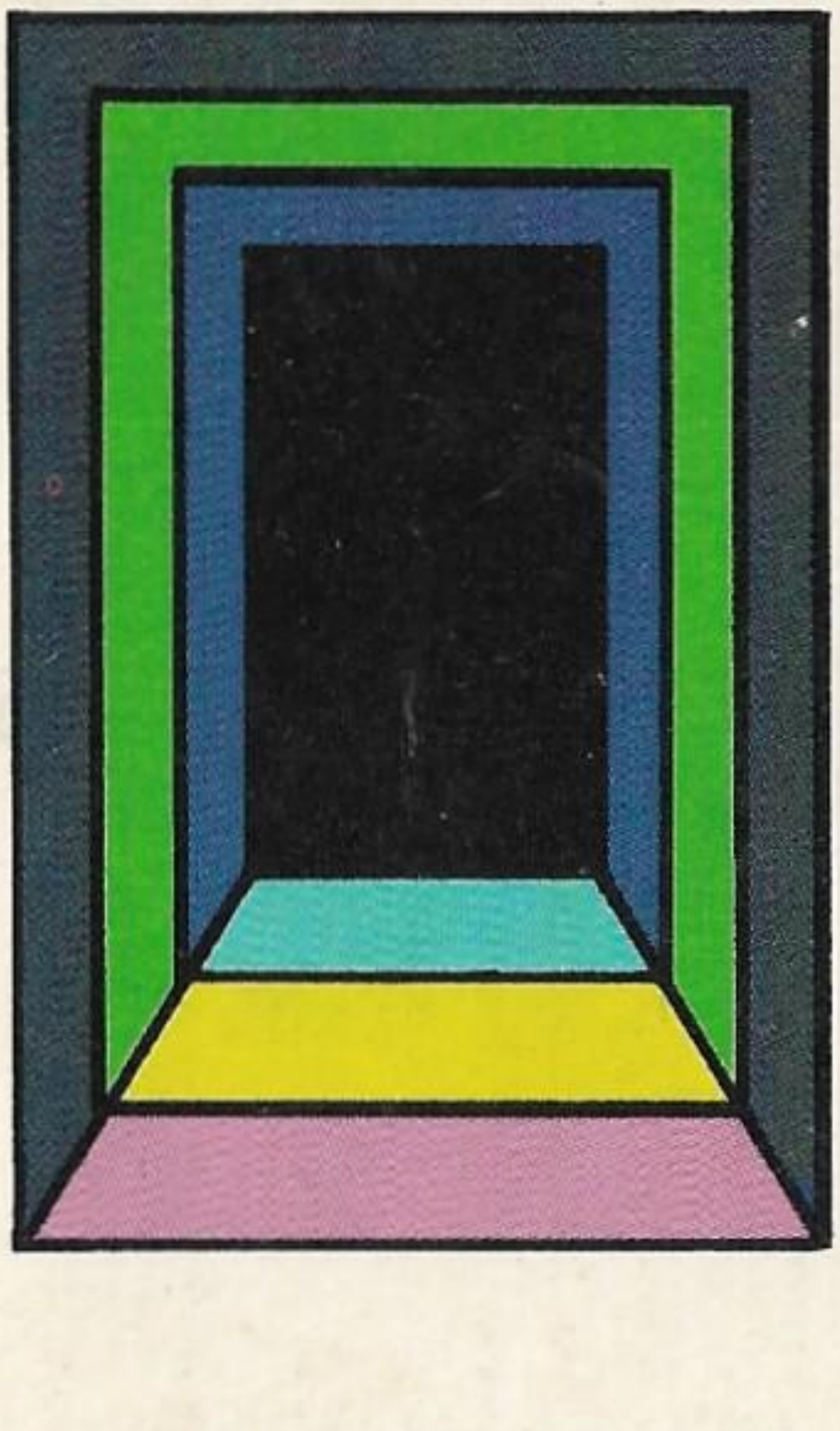
WEIRD UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

ERIC NORMAN



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PEOPLE WHO BURST INTO FLAMES!
TALKING ANIMALS! FALLING FLESH FROM THE SKY!

All documented

Celene Heldman

Feb 20, 1970

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WEIRD UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

Eric Norman

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I

People Who Never Came Back

On March 23, 1957, eight-year-old Tommy Bowman walked around a corner just ahead of six members of his family and disappeared without a trace.

The particular corner around which little Tommy vanished is located on a forest trail in the Devil's Gate Reservoir section above the city of Altadena, not far from Azusa in California's Angels National Forest. Any parent—any sympathetic human being—can imagine the horror and shock of rounding a corner but a few paces, a few moments, behind a child only to find that he has completely disappeared. But according to Tommy's father, sister, brother, uncle, and two cousins, that is exactly what happened.

Within hours after the child had disappeared, the area was alive with over four hundred volunteer searchers, trained rescue dogs, mounted patrols, and beaters. Crevices into which the child might have crawled or fallen were thoroughly examined. The forest trail itself was crossed and recrossed by dozens of experienced woodsmen, desperately searching for some kind of clue to the boy's disappearance. The entire area was crisscrossed again and again by low-flying helicopters.

To the practiced eyes of the woodsmen, it was quickly and easily determined that the boy had not slipped off the trail. There were absolutely no signs of dislodged rocks, torn-away shrubs, or broken branches to betray such an accident at the spot where Tommy had last been seen. Then, too, the boy's family had been just a few steps behind him, and they surely would have heard him cry out if he had somehow tripped and fallen off the trail. Even if the boy had not shouted out his fear and surprise, the family would have been close enough behind him to have seen him fall.

The intensive search for Tommy Bowman was maintained for a week, but no trace of the unfortunate lad was ever found. It was as if he had somehow been plucked from the earth by some unseen and unknown force. Little Tommy had joined the growing list of unfortunate children who have vanished in the Devil's Gate region since the morning of August 5, 1956, when Donald Lee Baker and Brenda Howell disappeared in the national forest.

Bruce Kremen disappeared just nine days before his seventh birthday. It was Bruce's first Y.M.C.A. hike, July 13, 1960, and although the small boy had been brimming with enthusiasm at the beginning of the outing, the altitude seemed to have been too much for him on his first trek. The group leader told Bruce to return to camp and rest. The leader pointed out that since they were still within sight of the camp, it would be best to go back at once.

The adult leader halted the troop of laughing, marching boys and walked with Bruce until they were within just a few yards of the camp's perimeter. The man told Bruce to walk on into camp and report to one of the leaders within the clearing. With a wave and a smile, the leader turned to rejoin the troop.

It was just a few yards to camp, but for some terrible, inexplicable reason, little Bruce Kremen never made those last steps to camp.

For twelve days more than three hundred volunteers combed every foot of the forest for ten square miles before they finally called a halt to their futile search. Bruce had become another victim of the 690,000 acres of rugged wilderness that has earned the appellation California's Forest of Disappearing Children.

But we are left with the eerie, demanding question: Where did they go?

Was it truly an unfeeling wilderness that claimed the lives of the children? If the missing children did in some way meet with a mysterious accident in the forest, then it seems strange that not one single trace of clothing, not a single identifying possession, not even a skeleton or skeletal fragment has ever been found. Wild animals, sex maniacs, kidnappers—the authorities have been forced to draw a blank on every possible lead.

Could it be possible that somehow, in a way we do not yet understand, these children literally disappeared? Can it be that there may exist voids, or holes, in our dimension that may offer oneway avenues into other planes of reality?

Each year thousands of people disappear in every country of the world. While the various missing persons bureaus do an adequate job of tracking down wandering children, runaway husbands, amnesiacs, law violators seeking to elude legal authorities, or those confused adolescents who want to join hippie communes without parental consent, there remains a disturbing number of people who, it seems, truly disappear, totally and inexplicably vanish, sometimes before the startled eyes of several witnesses. These disappearing people are not the disillusioned, the disgruntled, or the disassociated. These are people who may be completely absorbed in their work, totally occupied with the joy of life, eager to go about the business of living.

Or of fighting for causes.

In 1939, when China was seeking to resist the steady advances of the more heavily mechanized Japanese army, a call was sent out to Chinese forces to attempt a last-ditch stand to the south of Nanking. Sixteen miles from an important position near the only bridge across the river, 3,100 Chinese troops under the command of Colonel Li Fu Sien fortified themselves for a desperate fight to the finish. Colonal Li Fu Sien inspected the positions of his men, then retired to his quarters a mile behind the lines.

When the officer awakened the next morning, he was stunned by his aides' insistence that the right flank of the defense line would not respond to signals. When the colonel inspected the lines again, he found only 113 men stationed near the bridge—the remaining 2,988 men had completely vanished.

The soldiers' guns were still in place. Small campfires kept rice and tea warm. There were no signs of any kind of struggle that might have taken place under cover of darkness. All military and personal equipment lay scattered about the campfires, just as they had been left the night before. An entire army had disappeared!

If Japanese night-fighters had somehow managed to cross the bridge or swim the river and raid the camp, it is inconceivable that a band of commandos could have carried away 2,988 men without at least some of the men getting to their weapons and firing. It would have required a sizable contingent of Japanese to have trussed up and kidnapped nearly three thousand Chinese soldiers. Even if such an effortless coup had been accomplished, it remains totally inconceivable that the Japanese would not have made capital of the feat and used it extensively in their propaganda. By the same token, if the Chinese army had staged a mass desertion and fled to the Japanese lines

to surrender, such an act of cowardice would have made excellent grist for the invaders' propaganda mill. In either event, at least some report would have been made of either the capture or the surrender of 2,988 Chinese soldiers, and the official records of the Japanese show no such receipt of enemy troops for that date and that place.

The Chinese stationed in the outpost at the bridge and those who walked sentry duty that night swore that they had heard nothing unusual during the dark hours. They insisted that absolutely no one—friend or foe—had crossed the bridge that night. The colonel's aides also swore that no one had come toward their camp.

Wherever the 2,988 Chinese soldiers disappeared to, not a single one of them was ever seen again.

On January 5, 1900, a young man named Sherman Church left his office at Augusta Mills in Battle Creek, Michigan and, for some reason, ran directly into the mill proper.

He never came out of the building

Searchers literally took the mill apart looking for young Church. The surrounding woods, the river, and the town were meticulously explored for even the minutest clue as to his whereabouts, but no one ever saw Sherman Church again. And no one could ever guess why he left his desk in the business office and felt compelled to run into the mill.

In the early fall of 1926, eight women disappeared without a trace in and near Southend, London, England. In August, 1869, thirteen children disappeared in Cork, Ireland. Did they fall victim to undesirable companions?

In 1873, a shoemaker named James Burne Worson, who lived in Leamington, Warwickshire, England, was called on one of his bombastic boasts by Barham Wise, a linendraper, as the men stood cheerfully imbibing in a pub. Worson had an annoying habit of proclaiming himself to be one of England's more stalwart amateur athletes, and Wise, an old friend, decided that he would put an end to such crowing once and for all. He bet Worson that he could not run all the way to Coventry and back, a distance of about forty miles. The shoemaker accepted the bet and set out at once, accompanied by Wise, Hamerson Burns, a photographer who would immortalize the great feat, and a third man, whose identity was not recorded.

Worson jogged on for several miles, evidencing no signs of fatigue, demonstrating great powers of endurance, and shouting lusty cries of self-admiration. His three friends followed him in a light cart, chanting either encouraging remarks or insults as the spirit moved them.

None of them was prepared for what happened next. In the middle of the road, not a dozen yards in front of the cart and with three pairs of eyes full upon him, Worson stumbled, emitted a terrible cry, and vanished.

Later, in their testimony to the authorities, the three men were to insist that their athletic companion had not fallen to the road, but that he had vanished before he could reach it.

The three witnesses to Worson's mysterious disappearance were men in good standing in the community and nothing ever arose to discredit their bizarre, sworn account of their friend's extraordinary disappearance. If they had conspired against their drinking companion and had been guilty of foul play, the alibi they concocted to conceal their misdeed would certainly have called attention to their crime, rather than suppress the suspicions of the police. Such a tale of a sudden and inexplicable disappearance inspired strenuous investigation, but since no trace of Worson was ever found, the eerie testimony of his three friends was allowed to stand as the unquestioned record of his fate.

On September 23, 1880, David Lang told his wife that he wished to check the horses in the pasture before he went to town. Lang had taken no more than half a dozen steps when he vanished in full view of his wife, his two children, and a certain Judge Peck, who was just pulling up in front of the Lang's farmhouse.

Thinking that Lang must have stumbled and fallen, all of the witnesses arrived on the spot of the farmer's disappearance almost simultaneously. There was not a tree, a bush, a hole, or a single clue to the whereabouts of the man who had disappeared in full view of four witnesses on a bright, sunshiny afternoon.

By nightfall, scores of neighbors and townspeople had trooped across the Lang farm. Late into the night, dozens of searchers with lanterns in hand examined every foot of the pasture in which Lang had last been seen. The county surveyor probed the farm and proclaimed it free of sinkholes or underground caves.

How can such disappearances be explained?

Some theorists firmly believe that void places exist on our plane of physical reality. They perceive of these voids as holes through which animate beings and inanimate objects may fall into the invisible world and be seen no more. These holes, according to those who hold such hypotheses, may appear momentarily and then close again. They offer a gateway to another dimension in which our accepted perceptions of length, breadth, and thickness have no meaning. At the same time, these cavities may become a trap to the ensnared, as there may be little comparable to the world as we know it on another plane of a reality, and yet it may exist simultaneously with our own dimension.

On the morning of December 9, 1873, Thomas B. Cumpston and his wife, an elderly couple who held good positions in Leeds, England, seemed barely to escape being drawn into such a void.

They had stayed the night in a Bristol hotel, and early the next morning, a strange hole opened in the floor of their room. Their cries of fear and terror echoed strangely about them, so distorted that they could barely recognize their own voices. Cumpston later stated that he felt himself being pulled toward the opening but that, somehow, Mrs. Cumpston had been able to hold onto him until the aperture closed.

Moments after the room had returned to normal, the elderly couple fled the hotel in their nightclothes, terrified that the hole would once again appear and draw them both into its maw. Police halted them, returned to the hotel room to declare that nothing strange was in evidence and that no trapdoor of any kind existed in the floor. Other roomers testified that they had heard strange sounds coming from the Cumpstons' room, sounds they were unable to identify or describe.

A classic American case of a mysterious disappearance is that of Charles Ashmore, a teen-aged boy from Quincy, Illinois, who stepped out on a November evening in 1878 to fetch a bucket of water and never returned.

Christian Ashmore, the boy's father, and his eldest daughter, Martha, fetched a lantern and went in search of Charles. A light snow had fallen that clearly defined the young man's every footprint. After walking a bit more than halfway to the well, Christian Ashmore stopped and raised his lantern.

The trail of sixteen-year-old Charles had abruptly ended.

Beyond lay only smooth, unbroken snow.

The boy's last footprints were as conspicuous as any in the line; the very nail marks of his boots were visible.

The bewildered father took a wide circle around the tracks, in order to leave them undisturbed. He proceeded to the well, his daughter following, eyes wide with terror. The well was covered with ice, hours old.

As they returned to the house, the man and his daughter noted the appearance of the snow on both sides of the trail. No tracks led away from it on either side.

Morning light could reveal nothing more. Teen-aged Charles Ashmore had apparently walked into oblivion. Or into another dimension.

It is said that when Charles Ashmore's mother went to the well for water four days after her son's disappearance, she ran back to the house on the verge of hysteria. She claimed that she had heard the voice of her son calling to her. She had wandered about the area of the well, desperately seeking the physical person of her son, but Charles's voice had seemed to keep moving about. It was, she said, perfectly distinct and identifiable, but she had chased the audio will-o'-the-wisp until she became exhausted with fatigue and emotion.

For months after Charles Ashmore's disappearance, his voice was said to have been heard at irregular intervals by members of the family and by neighbors. All declared the voice to be that of the missing boy. All agreed that the voice seemed to come from a great distance, yet none could ever accurately determine its direction or specific location. At last the intervals of silence grew longer and longer, the voice fainter and fainter, and by midsummer the voice of Charles Ashmore was heard no more.

Had the teen-ager been drawn into another dimension? If so, he and his searching mother may have occupied the same space at the same time, but have been existing simultaneously on two separate and distinct planes of reality. Obviously, some aperture must have remained for quite some time, or the sound of Charles's voice would not have been heard. Perhaps but a tiny hole, like the knothole on a fence, was all that remained of the opening that had once been large enough for Charles to have stepped through on that fateful quest for a bucket of water. As heart-wrenching as it is to contemplate, the lad may even have been able to peer out through this last miniature window to his world to cry in vain for someone to rescue him.

In the case of David Lang, it is recorded that seven months after the farmer's disappearance his children noticed that the spot where they had last seen their father was a circle of stunted yellow grass some fifteen feet in diameter. To their shock and astonishment, the Lang children claimed to have been able to hear their father faintly calling for help.

The children and their mother maintained a vigil over the mysterious spot until the voice of David Lang faded away forever. Although Mrs. Lang eventually sold the farm, she never held a funeral for her husband. The woman could never accept the idea of her husband's death, and she continued to cling to the hope that he would return to them.

If we accept the hypothesis that such openings to another dimension exist, we are saddened to contemplate the grim picture of a Charles Ashmore, a David Lang, or any of the other victims of such an incredible misstep, searching desperately for the hole that slowly and inexorably seals itself—and them—off from our plane or existence. One can imagine the horror of having to adjust oneself to a totally alien world, and one can wonder how long he himself would survive before he simply wandered off and lost himself forever in another dimension.

There is some evidence to suggest that one who inadvertently stumbles into such a void may occasionally find another opening back into our stratum of reality.

On January 6, 1914, a naked man suddenly appeared on High Street, Chatham, Kent, England. The day was bitterly cold, yet the man ran about wildly without a stitch on him. People walking on the same street testified later that they had seen the man come from nowhere. He was just suddenly there, confused and frightened.

The man ran up and down the street until a policeman caught him. He was babbling unintelligibly and was unable to respond to the questions the police and the examining doctors asked him. Doctors declared him insane.

Maybe the poor man was insane—driven mad by an experience he found impossible to convey to his fellows.

Maybe he had stepped out of his shop in New Zealand one evening, begun his walk home, then suddenly found

himself being drawn into a strange aperture. He may have been only three blocks from his own front door, yet he was in a land as foreign and alien to him as if he had suddenly been transported to another planet.

Perhaps he had searched for the opening back into our dimension for days, for weeks, subsisting on exotic substances that some instinct told him might serve as food. Time, space, length, width—these terms meant nothing in this strange new world. Then, at last, an opening appeared, and it did not seem to be far from the spot where he had entered. He moved closer, stepped through . . .

. . . and found himself on a street in Chatham, Kent, England, in the dead of winter, his clothes dematerialized by the reentry.

Charles Fort, collector par excellence of such tales, writes in *Lo!* that he possessed records of six persons who, between January 14, 1920, and December 9, 1923, were discovered wandering on the streets or near the small town of Romford, Essex, England, "unable to tell how they got there, or anything else about themselves." Fort goes on to state that he knew of several cases such as that of a man who claimed that he had been walking along Euston Road, London, "but nine months later when next he was aware of where he was, found himself working on a farm in Australia."

Fort theorized that such interdimensional teleportation must surely affect the memories of those who survive the experience. It may also drive some individuals quite mad, such as the naked wretch who appeared suddenly gibbering on the cold winter streets of Chatham.

Could such a theory as Fort's of teleportation or an accidental step into another dimension be responsible for the mysterious appearances of black panthers in England, enormous serpents in South Dakota, or alligators in French streams? A tropical fish swims about in the Amazon, contentedly gobbling up insects. In the next instant, a trout fisherman in Canada is gasping in astonishment at the peculiar specimen at the end of his rod.

And then there are reports about people all over the world having sighted strange, otherworldly creatures. Could it be that the dimension that exists simultaneously beside, within, without (or whatever) our own is heavily populated with its own denizens? And why should it not be capable of supporting life fully as well as our own plane of reality? They may be creatures from another plane of existence, but they are living beings and entities nonetheless.

On August 25, 1968, pretty twenty-year-old Dixie Lee Arensen, bride of an associate youth minister at a Los Angeles congregation, vanished from the church without leaving any more of a clue behind than her glasses—glasses the nearsighted young woman always had to wear.

Police were able to place the arrival of Mrs. Arensen at the new church building at approximately 7:45 A.M. The church was only a five-minute drive from the Arensen house. She let herself into her office, took out a sheet of stencil paper, clicked on her electric typewriter, and began to type from a handwritten sheet of paper. When Jonathan Arensen arrived at the church at 9:15 A.M., the electric typewriter was still humming; but his wife, Dixie Lee was nowhere to be seen.

She has not been seen since—at least not at the time of this writing.

There did not seem to be any signs of a struggle, and Dixie Lee's father declared her a "gifted, sensitive, lively girl who wouldn't impose this situation on her family and her friends if she could help it."

On October 1, 1966, two lovely young women did not seem to be able to help avoiding their mysterious disappearance, either. Green-eyed blonde Nancy Liechner and striking brunette Pamela Ann Nater never came home from the forested region in the Ocala National Forest in Lake County, Florida.

On that day in October, Nancy and Pamela left their homes in Clearwater and Largo, on Florida's west coast, for a Sunday outing with a skindiving group called the Aquaholics. Once the young people arrived at Alexander Springs, however, the girls decided that the water was too cold for them.

Nancy, twenty-one, and Pamela, twenty, left their purses and their clothing with the group near the edge of the springs, and set out in their bathing suits to walk along a nature trail.

In the next moment, the two vivacious girls had completely vanished. Bennie Dautermann, twenty-two, Pamela's steady boyfriend for two years, and Craig Mackie, twenty-two, set out immediately on what was to grow into one of the most extensive manhunts in Florida's history. Seasoned, experienced outdoorsmen, Boy Scouts, mounted patrols, Navy helicopters, and hundreds of volunteers soon joined the skindivers in a painstaking search of the forested area surrounding the springs.

The methodical searchers were not rewarded for their efforts by turning up so much as a single strand of the girls' hair or a bent twig that pointed in a direction that they might have taken off the trail.

Mrs. Herman Nater told reporters that she knew that her daughter would never run away. "You simply can't resign yourself to the fact it's possible that your only daughter may be dead. There is no body . . . it's just crazy!"

In May, 1967, seven months after the girls' strange disappearance, Deputy Doug Sewell told newsmen that the authorities still chased down leads every week. State Attorney Gordon G. Oldham commented that the case was one of the toughest in which he had ever been personally involved. "I'd like to solve this thing," he said. "I lay awake nights."

At this writing, no clue to the young women's whereabouts has yet been made public. It would appear that they may have shared the same bizarre and tragic fate of so many others who have never come back.

On March 10, 1968, Mrs. Joe Sanchez, a forty-year-old Texas housewife, accompanied her husband and three sons on a fishing trip to Port Aransas. The rest of her family went back to the car to get something, and when they returned to the spot where they had left her, Mrs. Sanchez had vanished. A ten-day search failed to turn up any sign of the woman.

In the period of November, 1945, to December, 1950, seven people disappeared in the Mt. Glastenburg region near Bennington, Vermont.

The first person to disappear seemed a most unlikely candidate to ever become ever temporarily lost. He was Middie Rivers, a seventy-five-year-old hunting guide, who knew the region well. On November 12, 1945, Rivers led four hunters into the mountain region, then, while returning to camp ahead of the hunters, completely disappeared.

Hundreds of volunteers and local and state police searched the area for a month without discovering even the slightest trace of the missing guide.

On December 1, 1946, attractive, eighteen-year-old Paula Weldon, a student at Bennington College, set off on a hike for Mt. Glastenbury. Although she was seen by a number of people while on her trek, Paula never returned.

State detectives, the FBI, and state and local police were supplemented by hundreds of volunteer searchers. Newspapermen tracked down leads that took them to Canada, even the West Indies, but not even a single thread from Paula Weldon's coat was ever found.

James E. Tetford vanished on the third anniversary of Paula's disappearance—December 1, 1949. No one ever turned up the slightest clue to his whereabouts.

Early in 1950, eight-year-old Paul Jepson was left in a truck for just a moment while his father performed some small errand. Moments later, when Mr. Jepson returned to the truck, he found that his son had disappeared.

Once again, hundreds of volunteers were mobilized. Bloodhounds were set on the trail.

And now we must note a most eerie coincidence: The bloodhounds lost the scent at the exact spot where Paula Weldon was last seen. They could only mill about in confusion and bay in mournful despair.

Two weeks later, experienced woodswoman Frieda Langer vanished while on a hike with her cousin. Volunteers trudged through the snow-covered woods for a month before calling off the search.

They did not have long to rest. On December 3, 1950, Frances Christman left home to visit a friend who lived but a half mile away. Somewhere on that brief walk, she vanished without a trace.

A seventh victim had actually preceded Frances Christman. Martha Jeanette Jones had disappeared on November 6, but her mother had not released word of the teenager's absence because she thought Martha had run off with a soldier stationed in Virginia. When it was determined that the soldier knew nothing of the girl's whereabouts, a massive search was begun in the same Mt. Glastenbury area on December 12.

Martha, like the others, had simply walked into obscurity.

As a strange footnote to the accounts of these seven mysterious disappearances in the Mt. Glastenbury region, the corpse of Frieda Langer was found on May 12, 1951—that is, seven months after her disappearance. Curiously, the body was found in such an open, easily visible part of the forest that the hundreds of searchers could not possibly have overlooked it during their monthlong trudging of the woods. It would be like looking long hours in vain for a book on the shelves only to return to discover it lying open on your desk, where it must have been all the time.

The corpse of Frieda Langer was the only one ever discovered, and exposure to the elements had left the body in such a condition as to render detection of violence or any kind of clue to her fate virtually impossible. Not a single thread of clothing or strand of hair was ever found that could be traced to any of the other six victims of the Mt. Glastenbury area.

All of the disappearances had taken place in the same season of the year in the same area of Mt. Glastenbury. Could it be that some person or thing went on a "hunting trip" about that time of the year? Could it be that there exist cosmic or interdimensional entities that occasionally foray into our dimension in much the same manner as our sportsmen embark on safaris to Africa or Alaska? Could it be that there exists a species of beings who regard our world as a vast game preserve?

If this admittedly grisly bit of conjecture might be so, it appears that we may also have interdimensional fishermen.

At 6:00 P.M. on March 19, 1964, Lawrence Kolarik, a twenty-five-year-old salesman, called his wife from Ludington, Michigan, to tell her that he was about to leave on the *City of Saginaw*, a Chesapeake and Ohio Railway car ferry. Kolarik was on his way from Grand Rapids, Michigan, to pick up his wife and five children, who were still residing in Wisconsin. The young salesman had just bought a home in Grand Rapids and he was eager for his family to see it.

Kolarik drove his car onto the ferry at about 5:15 P.M. He checked into a cabin in the ferry and left his belongings there while he went to make the call to his wife. The ferry left Ludington bound for Manitowoc, Wisconsin, at 7:15 P.M. and it reached the Wisconsin side of Lake Michigan at 11:30 P.M.

An hour later, a crewman aboard the *City of Saginaw* reported that one car remained in the dock parking lot.

"It would seem that we have a sleepy passenger who's

still dozing in his cabin," the skipper said, running his finger down the passenger list. "Let's see. That would be Kolarik, Lawrence. Go on down and rouse him out. It's time that we were making the return trip to Ludington."

Moments later, the crewman returned to tell the ferry captain that Kolarik was not in his cabin. "His suitcase and belongings are there," the crewman explained, "and the bed hasn't been slept in. But he isn't anywhere around."

The skipper of the *City of Saginaw* groaned and clapped a palm to his forehead. "We must have left him back in Ludington!"

If Lawrence Kolarik had been left behind by the ferry, the Mason County sheriff's office could find no evidence of the missing salesman in Ludington. Several days later when the authorities called off the search, they were forced to admit that Lawrence Kolarik was at least the eighth person to disappear under mysterious circumstances in Ludington within a period of a few years.

Although police officials have classified each of the disappearances as accidental drownings or suicides, not a single body has ever been found.

"The absence of a corpse is easy to account for," said a police official. "Strong lake currents sweep the bodies away, and the water is just too cold to encourage skindivers to search for the corpses."

Certainly, in the case of Lawrence Kolarik, suicide seems out of the question. He had just purchased a new home, expressed happiness in his work, been praised by his superiors, and had just telephoned his wife to express his eagerness to rejoin his family.

"He was in such good spirits," Mrs. Kolarik told reporters. "He said that he was happy in his new location and that his bosses had told him what a good job he was doing in the area. He said that he could hardly wait to bring us back with him."

The only other "rational" explanation that authorities entertained for a time was the possibility that the young salesman had met with foul play in that brief hour between the time that he had talked with his wife and the time that he was due to sail on the ferry. No evidence has ever been discovered to support this theory, however, and no answer has been offered that completely satisfies the survivors of the many people who have disappeared in Ludington, Michigan's "port of vanishing people."

In his *Book of Saucers,* Gray Barker recounted how James Greer was allegedly lifted bodily from a farm near Zanesville, Ohio, by an invisible "something." According to reports, Greer's brother Albert, barely missed snatching his threshing legs. A hired hand came running to help, but by the time he arrived, the fast-rising Greer was wriggling desperately so high above them that he appeared to be only the size of a doll. It was later claimed that after James Greer had disappeared from sight, there was a blinding flash of light that seem to streak off toward the northeast.

Baker also reports the story of a Brooklyn, New York, mother who managed to hang onto her daughter's knees when she was mysteriously lifted five feet off the sidewalk. The woman later said that it was as if a magnet were pulling on her child. The girl remembered that something "tingly" had grabbed her.

In a similar case, Mrs. Le Marquands of Thompson, Manitoba, Canada, had just entered her home when she heard a strange beeping sound. Running to a window to investigate, she saw a swirling column of dirt and debris and heard the frightened shouts of neighborhood children. As she hurried outside, she saw her husband, who had just returned from work, staring up into the sky. There, revolving counterclockwise, was a large cube-shaped object that appeared to have alternating white and black sides. It had no visible openings or lights and was noislessly climbing higher into the sky.

While the others watched the object disappear from sight, Mrs. Le Marquands was startled to see a thirteen-year-old neighbor boy pinning her eight-year-old daughter down on the ground with his body. According to the children, the object had hovered over them and had caused the whirlwind. The little girl's skirt, blouse, and hair had stood straight up under the force of the suction, and she, too, had begun to rise into the air.

The courageous boy had thrown himself on her when she had risen about three feet off the ground and had continued to hold her down until Mrs. Le Marquands assured him that the threat to her safety had passed.

All over the world there are people who disappear under mysterious circumstances each year. Whether these unfortunate individuals are the victims of cosmic kidnappers, otherdimensional hunters, missteps into interdimensional voids, or the machinations of perversely clever and resourceful criminals, it appears to remain a tragically frightening fact of our existence that there will always be those who never come back.

II

Do Sea Serpents Really Exist?

“. . . My attention was drawn to a large brown fin or frill sticking out of the water, dark seaweed-brown in color, somewhat crinkled at the edge. It was about six feet in length and projected from eighteen inches to two feet from the water. I could see, under the water to the rear of the frill, the shape of a considerable body—a great head and neck did not touch the frill in the water, but came out of the water in front of it. . . . the neck appeared to be the thickness of a slight man’s body, and from seven to eight feet was out of the water. . . . The head had a very turtle-like appearance, as had also the eye. . . . It moved its neck from side to side in a peculiar manner. . . .” (From a paper presented to the Zoological Zociety of Britain by E. G. B. Meade-Waldo on June 19, 1906.)

“Sighted and passed . . . a Monster Fish of the serpent shape, about eighty feet long with slimy skin and short fins at about twenty feet apart on the back and in circumference about the dimensions of a good-sized whale. The jaws appeared to be about seven feet long with large teeth. . . .” (From the logbook of the steamer *Umfuli,* recorded by C. A. W. Powell, mate.)

The crewmen of H.M.S. *Daedalus* reported sighting a sea serpent in 1848 that was longer than their ship.

“In a few moments it became more distinct . . . showing an apparent length of about 40 feet [above the surface of the sea], the undulations of the water extending on each side of a considerable distance in the wake. . . . After passing the ship about half-a-mile, the serpent ‘rounded to’ and raised its head, seemingly to look up at us, and then steered away to the northward. . . .” (From a letter to the *Illustrated London News* by James Guy, commander of the vessel *Imogen,* April 15, 1856.)

On January 13, 1852, Captain Seabury, master of the whaler *Monongahela,* brought his telescope to bear on a monstrous creature thrashing about in apparent agony. Three longboats went over the side to end the beast’s misery. As the harpoon struck home, a nightmarish head almost ten feet long rose out of the water and lunged at the boats. Two of the longboats were capsized in seconds.

A heavy line snaked over the bow of the ship as the creature sounded and dove for the bottom. More than a thousand feet of line went out before the monster ceased its descent. The *Rebecca Sims,* under the command of Captain Samuel Gavitt, pulled alongside her sister ship; and the little floating community of New Bedfordmen discussed the strange beast with wild speculations and apprehensions.

By the next morning the massive carcass had popped to the surface. The colossus was much greater in length than the *Monongahela,* which measured over one hundred feet from bow to stern. The great sea beast had a body about fifty feet in diameter. Its neck was ten feet in diameter and supported a huge alligator-like head that was fully ten feet long. The whalers counted ninety-four teeth in its terrible jaws. The saberlike teeth were each about three inches long and hooked backward like those of a snake. The color of the gigantic sea creature was brownish gray with a light stripe about three feet in width running its full length.

When the practical Yankees tried to render the creature as if it were a whale, they were disappointed to find that the behemoth possessed only tough skin and no blubber.

Captain Seabury ordered the monster's head to be severed and placed in a huge pickling vat. He was well aware of the ridicule heaped upon those who claimed to have seen sea serpents and he was determined to bring back proof of the creature's existence. In addition to the hideous trophy, Captain Seabury wrote out a complete report of the death of the beast and included a lengthy description of the monster's anatomical proportions.

Captain Seabury gave his report to the homeward-bound *Rebecca Sims*. Unfortunately, he did not deliver the giant's head into Captain Gavitt's keeping as well. The *Monongahela* never made its way back to New Bedford with its fantastic prize. Many years later her name board was found on the shore of Umnak Island in the Aleutians.

By now the reader is musing, "Okay, so a lot of old-time seamen used to see sea serpents. But that was a long time ago. People are not so superstitious and ignorant today, and sea traffic is so heavy that if there really were sea monsters, we would soon catch one."

The reader would be only partially correct. Those individuals who have occasion to be on the sea still spot large, unidentifiable creatures of serpentine mien and incredible proportions, but even with increased sea traffic and improved sailing vessels, these massive monsters remain seemingly impervious to capture. There are, however, a number of fulltime sea serpent– and lake monster–hunters and it may not be too far in the future

before our zoos feature real-life sea monsters for a Sunday afternoon's viewing. If such a capture should soon take place, one thing is certain, the zoos will need enormously vast tanks in which to keep the things.

Late in March, 1969, two fisherman angling off the City Island Bridge near the Bronx, New York, claimed to have seen a giant sea creature moving in the deep channel used by the oil tankers that travel up the Hutchinson River. The fishermen described the monster as being slimy, black and gray, and bigger than anything that they had ever seen.

Harbor police who investigated the area found nothing, but they were soon called to Long Island Sound to look into a similar report from Little Neck Bay, Queens. It appears that something larger than a whale, something that could not be identified by longtime fishermen with practiced eyes, was exploring the bays of New York City.

At about the same time, on the other side of the world, North American Newspaper Alliance reporters were writing the story told by fourteen Hong Kong university students who saw a "big black creature with green eyes" staring at them from only twenty yards offshore.

According to Benjamin Chae, the students had heard a crying noise from the sea. One of the girls had looked up and screamed. "I looked out to the sea, and about twenty yards from us, a big black creature was rising from the water. I yelled out *Kai Kwai* [sea devil] and all the others ran up and saw it too."

The students estimated that the monster was twenty to thirty feet in length and they insisted that the thing made a loud, crying noise. In their opinion, it was definitely not a fish.

Something larger than a whale churning about near New York City . . . a gigantic creature with green eyes and an eerie voice. Could either of these sightings have anything to do with the massive "something" that was washed up on a Mexican beach on March 7, 1969?

At first, the huge blob was declared to be the remains of some prehistoric creature that had been thawed out of a drifting iceberg. Then two biologists at the Mexican navy's marine biology station at Tampico declared the hulk to be that of an oversized sperm whale. Other scientists countered by pointing to the rare horn and shoulderblade as evidence that the creature could hardly be a whale of any kind.

The behemoth was dragged in with the aid of tractors and more than one hundred fishermen and soldiers tugging on cables tied to its carcass. An estimate of its weight was made difficult by the mutilations of sharks and superstitious fishermen, but tests indicated that the unidentified monster had weighed somewhere between twelve and thirty-five tons.

One can only wish that actor-producer Cornel Wilde's cameramen had had more nimble fingers when they were shooting *Beach Red* in the Philippines. If they had been quicker on the trigger, we might have been in possession of a strip of film showing a rather vicious sea serpent in violent action.

Harrison Carroll told of the experience in his column in the Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner,* December 27, 1966: "They were shooting off Bauang. . . . After the firing of some underwater charges, some kind of a giant sea monster surfaced beside the boats. They said it had the flat head of a snake and a long serpent-like body. While the men were trying to get it aboard a boat, it bit the steel shaft off an underwater spear. That ended that. The monster sank again into the water."

In the May, 1965, issue of *Fate* magazine, Edward Brian McCleary told of his escape from a sea monster.

According to McCleary, he and four friends left on the pleasant Saturday morning of March 24, 1962, to go skindiving at the sunken *Massachusetts* in Pensacola Bay, Florida. A sudden storm sent the boys into the ocean and

they clung desperately to their rubber raft. After the squall had subsided, a heavy, oppressive fog settled over the sea.

"The misty air became filled with the odor of dead fish," McCleary wrote. "Just then, about 40 feet away, we heard a tremendous splash. The waves reached the raft and broke over the side."

Whatever it was, they knew that no boat had made the sound. They heard the splash again, and through the fog they could make out what looked like a ten-foot pole with a bulbous head on top. It remained erect for a moment, then bent in the middle and dove under the surface. A sickening odor permeated the air.

From out of the fog came a strange, high-pitched whine. The five young men panicked, slipped on their fins, and dove into the water. They decided to keep together and try for the portion of the wrecked *Massachusetts* that remained above water.

In back of them, as they swam, they could hear "whatever it was" splashing and making a strange, hissing sound.

Then they heard a terrible scream. "It lasted maybe half a minute," McCleary remembered. "Then I heard Warren call, 'Hey! Help me! It's got Brad! I've got to get outta here . . .' His voice was cut off abruptly by a short cry."

The three remaining swimmers clustered together, not knowing how many feet of ocean separated them from whatever was down there waiting for them.

Then: "Eric," McCleary gasped. "What happened to Larry? He was here a minute ago!"

The two boys dove for their friend, found nothing. Then Eric got a cramp in his leg. McCleary wrapped his arm around his neck, continued toward the wreck.

A wave broke, separated them. When McCleary surfaced, he saw Eric swimming ahead of him.

What happened next is the stuff of which lifelong nightmares are made.

"Right next to Eric that telephone-pole-like figure broke water," McCleary wrote. "I could see the long neck and two small eyes. The mouth opened and it bent over. It dove on top of Eric, dragging him under. I screamed and began to swim past the ship. My insides were shaking uncontrollably."

Somehow McCleary managed to swim the remaining two miles to shore. He remembers a weird montage of sprawling on the beach, stumbling to a tower of some sort, spending the night in a fitful slumber, then falling on his face before a group of boys. When next he awakened, he was in the Pensacola Naval Base hospital.

None of the journalists told all the facts of his escape from the hideous sea beast that took the lives of his four friends. Each of the various local newspapers carried the story of the tragedy, but they all attributed the boys' deaths to accidental drowning. The interviewing reporters told McCleary that the sea serpent was best left unmentioned.

McCleary wrote that he asked the director of the search and rescue units, E. E. McGovern, if he believed his story about the monster. According to McCleary, McGovern replied: "The sea has a lot of secrets. There are a lot of things we don't know about. People don't believe these things because they're afraid to. Yes, I believe you. But there's not much else I can do."

There was not much else the Gagne brothers of Biddleford, Maine, could do either, on Monday, August 7, 1967, when they hauled up a partial skeleton of the oddest-looking thing that they had ever seen.

The Gagnes are lobstermen, and Richard pulled up the skeletal remains while he was searching in an outboard motorboat for one of his lobster traps off the southern Maine coast. What appeared to be the snakelike head and neck of some undetermined creature was over eight feet in length.

Peter remarked that the eye sockets on the head were so big that he could put his fist in each one of them. The eyes were on the side of the head, like a snake's. Bits of flesh still clung to some of the vertebrae. The story with accompanying pictures of the skeleton were widely circulated by United Press International. Many people who came to view the remains agreed with the Gagnes that the thing looked "just exactly like what a sea monster ought to look like."

According to old records, an enormous sea serpent inhabited the waters of Gloucester harbor for two weeks in August, 1817. The many seamen and fishermen who saw the beast at fairly close quarters testified that the monster was nearly 140 feet in length. They contended that the sea serpent wriggled like a snake and possessed a row of coils that rose eight or ten inches above the water.

The behemoth appeared to have sought the sanctuary of the harbor in order to give birth to its young. One of the little beasties was killed on an island, and it was exhibited at the Essex Coffee House in Gloucester. The brown baby monster was reported to have measured three feet in length and was said to have had thirty-two humps on its back.

The rotting hulk of some massive unidentifiable creature lay on a beach in Tasmania for at least two years before a representative of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization decided to investigate. Three cattlemen had discovered the remains on the island's northwestern coast in August, 1960, but their sketches and reports of the dead monster caused little excitement until Bruce Mollison, curator of vertebrate mammals, decided to trek into the rugged wilderness for a close look.

Mollison was surprised that the carcass had not deteriorated into nothingness over the two years that it had lain exposed to the elements. Although a good deal of the strange humped creature had rotted away, Mollison quickly became convinced that the thing he was studying was not of any known species of fish or mammal. He was certain that the twenty-eight-foot long eighteen-foot-broad beast had not been a variety of whale, squid, ray, or the like.

The creature's skin was hard and rubbery and covered with a greasy, straggly kind of hair. Several rows of spines, mounted on flanges, skirted its rear.

Experts at the Royal Prince Albert Hospital were unable to identify the flesh of the monster as belonging to any known species. A field expedition of the CSIRO went directly to the carcass itself to test Mollison's report and to hack and chop off their own specimens. They reported that they were unable to identify the sea beast.

Then, as so often happens in such cases, a certain representative of officialdom issued the pronunciamento that since the flesh of the monster was something like the blubber of a whale, the creature must, therefore, be a whale.

Mollison expressed his shock at the official CSIRO report, and the ranchers who had discovered the rotting carcass fumed that they bloody well knew what a whale looked like and this had bloody well *not* been a whale!

What are we to conclude? Scientists are always clamoring for a live sea monster to examine. "If the monsters really exist," they laugh condescendingly, "bring us one to examine." One wonders if some of these learned men would know what to do with one if they could get their hands on a gloriously formed and massively proportioned sea serpent. On the other hand, the ranchers and the curator of vertebrate anatomy may have been mistaken. It may have been a whale. With a hump. And shaggy hair all over its body.

The unidentified sea creature that appeared off the New

Jersey coast on August 19, 1963, could not have had a more appreciative audience. As reported in *The New York Times,* the initial sighting was made by Dr. Lionel A. Walford, director of the Fish and Wildlife Research Center of the United States Department of the Interior at Sandy Hook, New Jersey.

Dr. Walford cautioned the reporter not to say that the scientist had seen a "sea serpent," but the expert did provide an excellent description of whatever it was he had seen: "It was at least 40 feet in length and about five inches thick and perhaps seven to eight inches deep—looking something like an enormously long, flattened eel. . . . I finally made a tentative identification of it as what is known as a Venus Girdle, a jelly-like creature . . . However, upon examining my scientific references, I soon and surprisingly determined that the Venus Girdle does not grow longer than a few feet. And no amount of research I could do provided me with a proper identification of this very strange creature."

Obviously Dr. Walford's sighting was of an unidentified sea creature of much less heroic proportions than many of the others we have reported in this chapter.

On May 12, 1964, three men aboard the Norwegian fishing boat *Blue Sea* reported that they had seen a sixty-foot sea monster near Nantucket Island. Alf Wilhemsen was the first to sight the strange creature and he yelled at his brother Jens and his partner Bjarne Houghan to look at the gigantic serpent swimming a few hundred feet away from their eighty-foot boat.

According to the Norwegian fishermen, the creature had an alligator-like head and a lobster-like tail. The body was dotted with black and white spots and the sea beast had a series of humps on its otherwise smooth back.

When the fishermen sailed into New Bedford harbor to report their remarkable sighting to the U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Coast Guard vessels and fishing boats set out to search for the huge serpent. Three days later, the monster was spotted by the crew of the dragger *Friendship* in an area about ten miles from where the Norwegians had first seen it.

The *Friendship* circled the massive creature twice so that the crew could get a good look at it. Captain Albert Pike gave a description of the alligator-headed serpent that exactly matched the one given by the Norwegians. The creature swam at a speed of five knots and did not bother to submerge once during the twenty minutes in which it was under observation by the *Friendship*. Unfortunately, the crewmen did not bring the sixty-foot sea beast back alive, but they did add another well-attested sighting to the history of sea serpent lore.

Some scientists have entertained with some degree of seriousness the popular speculation that the sea monster may be a surviving member of one of the species of giant sea reptiles of the Mesozoic Age. It seems that no one has ever offered a completely satisfactory explanation for the quite rapid extinction of the giant reptiles—dinosaurs on the land, pterosaurs in the air, and massive, multitonned ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs in the sea.

The nineteenth-century naturalist Philip Gosse was an exponent of the plesiosaur theory to explain the sea serpent. Gosse argued that although the Mesozoic Age had ended tens of millions of years ago, there was no a priori reason why one of the descendants of the great sea reptiles could not have survived.

Our own century has produced evidence that makes it easier to give Gosse's theory added credence, for example, the discovery of crossopterygian fish off southeast Africa—fish that have survived almost unchanged for seventy million years, since before the Age of Reptiles.

Other scientists champion the hypothesis that the sea serpent stories may be attributed to sightings of giant eels. Dr. Maurice Burton points out in his book *Living Fossils* that in recent years eel larvae three feet long have been discovered. If one compares the relative sizes of the larva and adults in eels of normal size, Burton states, there is no reason why such giant larvae should not attain a length of thirty-six feet when full grown.

At the beginning of the 1960's, Dr. Anton Brun of the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, announced the acquisition of an eel larva more than six feet long, with 450 vertebral plates. The only known eels have but 105 vertebral plates. Dr. Brun, once again working with the comparative sizes of larvae and adults in eels of normal size, reasoned that the larva could easily grow into a monster ninety feet long and weighing several tons.

A certain number of marine zoologists favor the existence of an as yet undiscovered aquatic mammal related to the whales as their candidate for the role of sea serpent. They contend that the hairy manes and flippers so often reported on the "serpents" would be most unlikely appendages for true reptiles. Also, quite convincingly, they argue that only a warm-blooded mammal would be able to survive in the icy waters of the North Atlantic where so many of the classic sea monster stories have had their origin.

Other zoologists have expanded the theory of an unidentified giant sea mammal and combined it with another possible survivor of prehistoric times. They theorize that an ancient species of whale, the aeuglodon or basilosaurus, whose fossil remains are well known, would be well equipped for the role of sea monster. Basilosaurus is known to have been a huge beast with a slim, elongated body measuring over seventy feet in length. Its skull was long and low and the behemoth propelled itself by means of a single pair of fins located at its forward end. Basilosaurus is known to have survived into the Miocene Epoch, just over thirty million years ago. If crossopterygian fish have survived for more than seventy million years, it seems quite possible that such a comparative youngster as basilosaurus could still be inhabiting our seas.

But what is it that inhabits our lakes?

"I saw a big commotion in the water, then a thing like a rather thick periscope appeared and moved along from right to left, accompanied by a great disturbance about the 'periscope' and behind it."

The speaker is R. R. MacEwen, a respected Inverness, Scotland, attorney. He is referring to an experience which took place at Loch Ness, Scotland. There are, of course, no submarines in the lake. There is, it would appear, a whole tribe of lake monsters.

After centuries of keeping an eye out for "Nessie" (St. Columba made the first recorded sighting in 565 A.D.) it appears that some solid scientific proof is building up to demonstrate that the legendary monster of Loch Ness is truly more than legend.

Clem Lister Skelton, resident technician of the Loch Ness Phenomena Investigation Bureau, Limited, claims to have seen "Nessie" more than any other man, because he has "looked at that darn loch probably more than anyone else." He confessed to Godfrey Anderson of the Associated Press that "Nessie" was his personal Moby Dick. "We have one of the largest creatures in the world in this loch's confines and we don't know what it is," he said. "It's challenging. It's exciting. And it's infuriating."

Volunteer monster-watchers work in relays from mid-May to mid-October. Each volunteer is equipped with log pads, field glasses, and movie cameras with telephoto lenses. Whenever anyone snaps anything, the film is sent off to the Defense Ministry's Joint Air Reconnaissance Center (JARIC) for careful analysis. The JARIC comprises the same group of experts who in 1943 successfully pinpointed the Nazis' secret V-2 rocket base, at Peenemünde, Germany, from aerial reconnaissance pictures.

According to the JARIC, the monster-watchers and photographers are seeing things that really do exist. Once when the experts identified a strip of film as being a sequence of "two animate objects weighing about one and a half tons each," even the then Air Force Minister Lord Shackleton had to swallow his oft-aired disbelief in monsters. "I find it very hard to discount the finding of the JARIC reports," he admitted.

Tim Dinsdale, a member of the JARIC team, says the twelve- to sixteen-foot-long thing he photographed traveling at a speed of ten knots was "almost certainly animate."

On January 24, 1966, the Royal Air Force issued its analysis of the Dinsdale filmstrip. In quoting brief excerpts from the report, we find that the RAF zeroes in on the "hump" of the creature and determines that it is moving at a speed of about ten miles per hour. After much technical discussion about the relative size and perspective of the "solid, black, approximately triangular shape" (the hump) and a comparison of the unidentified creature with a motorboat moving in the same area (filmed immediately after Nessie had swum past), the RAF concedes that the object is "*not* a surface vessel."

And: "One can presumably rule out the idea that it is any sort of submarine vessel for various reasons, which leaves the conclusion that it probably is an animate object."

Can a breeding herd of beasts of such dimensions (Skelton estimates that there may be twenty or thirty Nessies) exist in a lake? Yes, if the lake is the size of Loch Ness. Scotsmen have not been talking about some big fish in a little slough all these years. Loch Ness is twenty-four miles long by about a mile across. It has a mean depth of 433 feet, twice that of the North Sea into which it flows through the River Ness at its eastern end. Loch Ness is fed by five rivers and fifty mountain streams. The loch never freezes and snow rarely lies near its shores. Its temperature remains fairly constant at about 42° Fahrenheit, summer or winter.

David James, a former member of the British Parliament and head of the Loch Ness Phenomena Investigation Bureau, summed up the conclusions of the bureau in the spring of 1968: "Let's get one thing straight. There is no 'Loch Ness Monster' which has lived for a few thousand or million years. What we are investigating is the possibility of a herd, breeding, evolving like any other species in waters such as these, cut off from the sea, for 5,000 to 7,000 years.

"One thing is perfectly clear: There is something there. Too many reliable persons have seen too much, with too little possibility for coincidence, connivance, or conjuration to pass the entire matter off as only a figment of someone's imagination."

In 1968, through a three-year grant from Field Enterprises Educational Corporation of Chicago, the bureau came into possession of more sophisticated photographic search equipment, biopsy darts, and other advanced research materials. Professor Roy P. Mackal, University of Chicago biologist, is head of the American branch of the bureau. Professor Mackal theorizes that the type of creature that most fits the mass of descriptive evidence and photos has to be some kind of large aquatic mammal that would be capable of thriving above 50° north latitude.

Even with all these aids of modern science, the search for Nessie remains a difficult task. The water in Loch Ness becomes a murky brown just a few feet down and is filled with floating particles of peat. Such a condition makes all the standard underwater exploration techniques relatively useless.

Depth sounding becomes difficult because the sides of Loch Ness are too sheer.

What about the fact that no monster carcasses have ever been washed ashore? Well, as bureau members point out, the sides of the loch are steep, the bottom is deep with mud, and there are no tides in the loch that would push dead hulks ashore.

It appears, however, that a team of sonar experts may have had definite success during an expedition in August, 1968. The equipment they used was chiefly developed by David Tucker, head of the electronic engineering department at Birmingham University, and the results of the two weeks of sonar probing was reported in the British journal *New Scientist*.

The study seems to provide evidence that a family of monsters does indeed inhabit the murky waters of Loch Ness. Tucker wrote that in one thirteen-minute period sonar echoes defined large objects moving underwater. A massive object was recorded swimming at a speed as high as seventeen miles per hour and diving at a rate of 450 feet a minute.

"From the evidence we have," said Tucker, "there is some animal life in the loch whose behavior is difficult to reconcile with that of fish . . . It is a temptation to suppose the echoes must be the fabulous Loch Ness Monsters."

Although "Nessie" is far and away the most famous of all monsters inhabiting inland bodies of water, there are reports of equally large, equally bizarre aquatic creatures in "lochs" all over the world.

In 1958, Dr. Vadim Vladikov went to Lake Pohenegamook to question the witnesses who claimed to have seen a monster splashing around in the lake country two hundred miles east of Quebec City. Dr. Vladikov was the director of the Quebec Department of Game and Fisheries, a man whose opinion on the matter would certainly be worth a great deal.

"I have questioned a great many people in Snt. Eleuthere [a large village in the area] and they all describe the same thing—an animal between 12 and 18 feet long, brown or black in color, with a round back two or three feet wide, and a sawtooth fin down the center. Any time anyone approaches close, the animal slithers away and slinks below the lake's surface." However, he later remarked: "It's probably a big fish, though it just might be something else." It must have been something else, unless there are gigantic fish in Quebec that venture out on land and slither back to water only when someone approaches.

The lakes in the great group including Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis have had a long, continuing history of something big and strange frightening fishermen. In 1960, Professor James A. McLeod, head of the Department of Zoology of the University of Manitoba, left the environs of the campus to investigate, announcing before his departure that the something was probably just a big snapping turtle.

But then it was discovered that a fisherman had made a model of a peculiar-looking bone he had found near the shore. The original had been destroyed in a fire, but either the fisherman was a whiz at paleontology or he had actually made a replica of a bone from a creature believed extinct for millions of years.

Professor McLeod was no longer interested in looking for giant snapping turtles. He allowed that giant prehistoric reptiles that had once lived in that area might somehow have survived. "Of course," he emphasized, "we are skeptical, but it is a scientific possibility."

According to longtime monster-hunter Ivan T. Sanderson, the real "hotbed" for freshwater monsters on the North American continent is the Canadian Rockies, extended into Montana and Idaho. "Here," Sanderson writes in an issue of *Saga,* "there are literally dozens of lakes with which Amerindian myth, legend, and folklore associates monstrous water animals. Among these . . . are several in which white men have said they have seen inexplicables; and there are a dozen or so that have continuing Loch Ness–type traditions. . . ."

Sanderson lists "Ogopogo," the mysterious denizen of Lake Okanagan in British Columbia; the *Ta-Zam-a* and the *Tsinquaw* (Indian names) of Lakes Sushwap and Cowichan in the same area; and the "Oogle-Boogles" of Lakes Waterton and Flathead in Montana as being among the more famous of our inland water monsters. According to the zoologist-writer, reports on the Oogle-Boogles have been recorded for decades. Some witnesses have credited the creatures with lengths up to sixty feet.

Sanderson reports that most of these unidentified swimming things are described as having cowlike heads that sit on the end of long, slender necks with humps behind. "Longnecks," he calls them, and he has amassed documentation to prove that they exist in nearly every country in the world.

Yes, even in Russia.

A United Press International report not long ago gave information concerning a monster that terrorized Siberia's Lake Vororta. It was reported to roar and was described as spherical and horrible to see. The monster had allegedly eaten a swimming dog, a reindeer, and an undetermined number of human beings.

Geologist Viktor Tverdokhlebov recalled for the press what he had seen in nearby Lake Labynikir in 1953:

"It was an ominous-looking dark gray sphere that showed slightly above the water," he said. "It inspired nearly uncontrollable fear as it approached. It resembled an oversized glistening tin barrel with a slanted horn rudder on its back. There were two bulging protrusions that must have been eyes approximately seven feet apart on the head.

"The creature reached the bank, stopped, then went into a series of convulsions which raised waves and fountains of water as it disappeared below.

"There was no question about the monster's intentions. It was heading straight for us and only when the ripple of water it had stirred reached our feet was its terrible hypnotic spell broken. We were able to flee the water and escape not a moment too soon!"

No such things as sea serpents? They may not really be "serpents," and their size may from time to time become rather exaggerated, but how many of us would have stayed in the water to face down the creature from which Viktor Tverdokhlebov and his friends so judiciously fled?

III

The Enigma of Ghost Ships

It is the evening of the autumn equinox, and the inhabitants of Merigomish, a small fishing village on the north shore of Nova Scotia, are keeping their yearly vigil. Beginning at dusk, those nearest the water trained their eyes on Northumberland Strait, which separates Prince Edward Island from the mainland.

Before long they are rewarded with the sight of an old sailing vessel, and excited residents rushed to telephone their inland friends.

"She's on her way! She's coming!"

Soon the shoreline is crowded with lantern-laden, telescope-toting Nova Scotians, eagerly awaiting the best command performance of the year. Arriving by horse and jalopy, they soon covered all the higher observation points along the coast. The best seats in the house are all occupied by the time the maritime drama is ready to unfold.

The curtain goes up on a full-rigged, three-masted sailing ship, moving northeast at a speed of about twenty knots. She sits in the water at around a hundred tons. If it is a bright and well-lit night, the spectators may see the copper shine on her keel. If the night is foggy or hazy, the vessel is etched in ethereal phosphorescence. From her decks and rigging can be seen lights that wink on and off in the dark.

Before the eyes of the audience the ship suddenly lurches, as though running into some submerged obstruction. Within minutes shadowy figures are seen jumping overboard, clearly outlined by an explosion of fire. The flames quickly engulf the ship, hungrily climbing the mast and igniting the sails on their upward climb. Before long the rigging and eventually the mast lie collapsed on the deck and the charred vessel sinks to a watery grave.

For three generations the ghostly ship has approached the north shore, repeated the same actions, and vanished beneath the waves. Next to nothing is known about the ship, although it is popularly believed that she was a pirate ship, and that she plunged to her doom during a tempestuous storm.

From the vast amount of research available on phantom ships it is readily apparent that ghostly phenomena are not restricted to shore duty. Ships' logs for three and a half centuries have recorded the sudden appearances and disappearances of "ships that were not there," floating derelicts—perfectly navigable ships mysteriously abandoned with no sign of surviving crew members—and ships that vanish without a trace. Clearly, Neptune has more than one means of claiming the lives of those who attempt to traverse his watery domain.

One of the more persistent folk myths surrounding the sea is the tale of Van Dieman and *The Flying Dutchman*. According to the legend, Van Dieman is doomed to sail the seas in his phantom ship until the end of time. Less hallowed in the literary tradition is the sailing vessel *Palatine*, an immigrant ship from Holland that met with foul play during Christmas week, 1752, off Block Island on the New England coast. Sightings of this burning vessel are as consistent as the continuing belief in *The Flying Dutchman*. In his poem, "The Palatine," John Greenleaf Whittier made the first move toward making this unfortunate tragedy a part of American literature.

But folk myths alone do not keep the belief in ghost ships alive. In April 1936, the S.S. *Khosrou*, a ship of British Indian registery, left Calcutta on her way to Bombay. The weather was rough and the rains frequently poured down. On the return voyage the skies were still heavy, and after several days out on the high seas the S.S. *Khosrou* was barely making five knots in a torrential downpour. Under such conditions the ship's captain was taking no chances. Every two minutes the sirens were sounded at his command.

All at once the sound of another siren echoed that of the *Khosrou*. Immediately all engines were cut and the ship drifted through the nearly blinding rain. Blast for blast the twin sirens reverberated across the water, but the crewmen of the *Khosrou* searched in vain for the source of the other siren.

Then suddenly the other vessel was sighted off the port bow, looming up out of the mist. She was a motor ship, about 6,000 tons, and as she came within a cable's length of the *Khosrou*, its crew was able to read her name clearly. She was the *Tricouleur*. But to the anxiously scanning eyes of the *Khosrou*, she appeared to be deserted. No helmsman could be discerned at the wheel, and the deck was devoid of humanity.

The *Tricouleur* glided past in full view of the *Khosrou*, then disappeared again into the gloom. Within minutes of its passing, however, the rains cleared up and visibility was restored. Up ahead the coast of Ceylon could be seen. In back of them. . . .

"Hey!" cried the first mate in alarm. "Where's the *Tricouleur?"*

The skipper heard him and wheeled around. There was no trace of the other vessel! Visibility by this time was seven miles. Considering the speed of the two ships and the fact that the other had passed only ten minutes before, the *Tricouleur* should have been three miles behind them. The skipper and the mate looked around. They were alone on the sea.

Ship's navigator Robinson motioned the captain into the chartroom.

"Just behind our position," Robinson said slowly, "about two miles back, there is a symbol labeling the spot of a wreck. Alongside the symbol you can see the notation: 'M.S. *Tricouleur,* with a cargo of chemicals, exploded and sank at this point at 5 P.M., on January 5, 1931.' "

The skipper looked at the chart and then glanced involuntarily at the clock on the wall. It was January 5, 1937, and the time was 5:15 P.M. It was six years to the hour since the wreck of the *Tricouleur* had occurred.

"Did we see a ghost ship," Robinson later wondered, "forever doomed to wander near its grave?"

It is experiences like that of Robinson and the crew of the S.S. *Khosrou,* in addition to the many persistent legends, that sustain belief in ghost ships. There are many mariners who scoff at such tales, but there are also many who become firm, albeit unwilling, believers after their own brush with such phantom phenomena.

Today inhabitants along Bay Chaleur on the northern shores of New Brunswick, continue to see the mysterious "fire ship" that has puzzled their parents and grandparents for almost a century.

In a spring, 1968, article on this floating phantom, the *Hamilton Spectator,* in Hamilton, Ontario, reported that many of the accounts are difficult to credit, but it cannot be denied that a great number of responsible, reliable people have witnessed this phenomenon.

According to the greatest number of reports, huge tongues of fire shoot up the masts. Against this blazing inferno, which lights up the night sky, burning figures allegedly scramble in the ship's rigging.

Curiosity has been aroused among the viewers of the flaming ship, causing a great deal of search for a reasonable explanation. The first reaction of several first-time sighters, however, is to put to sea and look for survivors. But searching parties are rewarded with no sign of visible wreckage bobbing on the surface.

Some of the more popular explanations for the fire ship are:

That it is the ghost of the charred remains buried under the sand at Green Point, which was burned to the waterline. Although this vessel's history is unknown, legend has it that it ran aground some three hundred years ago.

That it is the *John Craig,* a craft whose career ended in tragedy at Shippegan Island.

That it was a ship that put out from a U.S. port, manned by a drunken crew and captained by a partying skipper, which lost its way at sea and drifted into Bay Chaleur. According to legend a fight broke out in the captain's room, causing a lamp to explode. The crew was unable to extinguish the flames, and they eventually overran the ship. The entire crew is said to have lost their lives, and because their negligence caused the loss of their ship, they are condemned to wander forever on the waves.

That it was an immigrant ship that sailed into the bay thinking it was the Gulf of St. Lawrence. While in the bay's waters it was struck by lightning when a storm suddenly arose off the Gaspé coast. In this tale two small boys survived when the ship ran aground at the mouth of the Restigouche River, but all others perished.

That the flaming phantom is a warship fired upon during the War of 1812.

So far these are the leading nominations for the ghost ship of Bay Chaleur. Unfortunately, it is next to impossible to determine which ship's tragic end causes it to ceaselessly reenact its last hours. But even doubting visitors are forced to admit that *something* strange lights up the waters at night in Bay Chaleur.

According to the *Hamilton Spectator,* Mrs. John Nicol and her next-door neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Freeman Rogers, have all observed the ignited ship. The Rogerses, as well as six other people in their house, watched for nearly an hour ". . . flames coming from the outline of a ship." Daughter Edith reported seeing a three-masted vessel "with her sails brilliantly ablaze."

Next door, Mrs. Nicol described the phenomenon as "riding the water but not going anywhere. I don't believe in ghost ships," she added, "but that's what it looked like."

Sometimes a sailor receives an even more eerie sensation when he views yet another specter of the seas: the perfectly seaworthy vessel left abandoned, drifting, with no sign of any crew. Frequently these ships are discovered with not only everything in place and no evidence of violence, but all the lifeboats equally well secured and unused. The question that demands answering, and remains forever tantalizingly unanswered, is *What happened to the crew?* And lurking at the back of many a sailor's mind is the fear that if it could happen to them, it could happen to him.

Take the strange case of the U.S. brig *Ellen Austin.* On July 14, 1881, Captain Baker duly noted in the ship's log:

"Came across derelict vessel. No clues upon her as to her identity or port of call, or why she was abandoned. Her crew may have been removed by another craft for some unknown reason."

It was in the afternoon that the *Ellen Austin* spied a twin-masted schooner under full sail, off the starboard bow. The wind was scant and the ship was not making great progress. What intrigued Captain Baker, however, was the fact that the mysterious schooner was minus a flag and devoid of all identifying marks.

"Alter course to intercept," the captain instructed the helmsman. "I want to hail her."

As the distance between the two vessels narrowed, Captain Baker anxiously scanned the decks of the strangely unmarked schooner.

"Ahoy there!" he shouted. "What ship are you?"

The captain fought back the premonition that no one would answer him. Waves of uneasiness washed over him as he called, more loudly this time, to the schooner.

"Ahoy! What ship are you? Is there anyone on board?"

But his shouts were answered only by the rolling swell of the ocean.

Baker did not like the situation and he was determined to clear it up once and for all. Calling for one of the boats to be lowered, he prepared to board the strangely silent craft. With the sun shining brilliantly upon them, he and two other crew members searched the schooner fore and aft. They discovered everything shipshape, and the vessel was totally seaworthy. There were no signs of violence or a hasty departure. Furthermore, all the lifeboats were secured, indicating that no attempt had been made to get away in them. And, of course, the ship was deserted. Though the three men of the *Ellen Austin* scoured the unmarked vessel, no indications of human habitation could be found.

Captain Baker was stymied. Where could the crew have got to? Had something mysteriously plucked them off the deck and out from below? Had they boarded another ship for some strange inexplicable reason? But why would they have done so?

The captain's knowledge of the sea could supply him with no explanation capable of satisfying the burning questions of his men. At length he detailed a skeleton crew to man the deserted schooner, after which the two ships continued on their way to Boston.

On July 20, however, a storm separated the two, and the *Ellen Austin* temporarily lost sight of her traveling companion. It was two days before the other vessel was again within the American brig's sight.

Baker again maneuvered his ship over to the unmarked schooner, and hailed the members of his crew who were sailing her.

"Ahoy! Is everything all right?"

As before, he was greeted with silence. With the dreadful feeling of acting out last night's bad dream in reality, the captain boarded the other vessel once more, and grimly searched her, stem to stern. Once more the ship was utterly deserted!

In a panic some of the men rushed for a whaleboat with visions of sea monsters or sky devils urging them on in retreat.

"Let's leave before it gets us!" cried one of the men.

"Stop what you're doing," shouted the captain in a rage. "This accursed ship is not going to get the better of me. Now I'm taking her to port, no matter what, and you men will do as I say."

The *Ellen Austin* came close to being the scene of a mutiny, but Baker managed to rally his men. Choosing the most stalwart of his crew he ordered them on board the haunted schooner, giving them muskets with which to defend themselves.

"Don't worry," he assured them. "We'll be careful always to remain within calling distance. We'll bring her in yet."

True to his word, the captain kept the two ships within a few cable's lengths of each other during the next several days. Fate, however, was determined to intervene once again. On August 4 another storm broke loose upon them, filling the unwilling men on the other craft with a grim fear. Desperately these men attempted to keep in touch with the mother ship by shouting themselves hoarse. But as the rain increased, visibility decreased, and shortly thereafter the schooner was lost from sight. Within minutes the roar of the storm and the waves drowned out the voices of the men as well.

When at length the fury of the storm abated, the *Ellen Austin* began to search the surrounding sea for the ill-fated schooner. For four days they searched, the captain fighting despair and rising hysteria among his crew. Eventually Baker was forced to continue on to Boston, without finding a single trace of the missing ship. She had simply vanished, never to be seen again.

In 1850, there was another sighting of a floating derelict. At Easton's Island, not far from Newport, Rhode Island, local farmers and fishermen looked up from their work one day to see an unusual vessel making for the shore, under full sail, in a stiff breeze. Crowds began to gather on the beach in concern, for it was evident that the ship was bound to run aground

Instead of crashing onto the shore, though, the ship gently glided up to the beach and came to a clean halt as the astonished witnesses watched in amazement. The crowd immediately clambered on deck and discovered she was the *Seabird,* under the command of Captain John Huxham. Further searching revealed that she was due in Newport that very day on a return voyage from Honduras.

As in the case of the *Ellen Austin*'s unmarked schooner, the *Seabird* was found to be in perfectly navigable order. Charts and instruments were undisturbed and in excellent condition. As a rather macabre gesture, mess was all laid out for the crew, and coffee was found to be perking happily upon the galley stove.

Apparently, though, no one liked the brand of coffee the cook used, for, with the exception of one mongrel dog, there was no living thing on board the ship.

Intensive investigations were launched, but all clues soon ran aground. The captain and his crew had vanished completely during calm weather and from a perfectly sound ship. The investigators were forced to admit defeat, wishing for the hundredth time that the dog could talk.

A similar tale is that of Captain Hans Zeiber of the *J.C. Cousins.*

Captain Zeiber was justly proud of his eighty-seven-foot twin-masted vessel. She had originally been outfitted as a pleasure yacht for a millionaire, and, in 1894, Captain Zeiber enjoyed knowing he was the owner of the fastest ship afloat in his waters.

Carefully, on a bright October day, the *J.C. Cousins* made her way through the treacherous shoals and sandbars of Astoria, Oregon, then anchored off Fort Stevens waiting for the tide to turn. The lookout at Cape Disappointment recorded that she upped anchor at 5 o'clock.

Later, coastguardsmen at Canby Lighthouse stood gazing at her sleek lines through their telescopes, as she gracefully made her way to the open sea.

Suddenly, still under the watchful eyes of the coastguardsmen's telescopes, the sleek vessel abruptly came about and cut through the water for shore.

It was assumed by those watching her that someone had become ill or been hurt, and was in need of assistance on shore. Acting on this assumption, the watchful sailors alerted the shore, stating that they thought the ship needed help.

A group of people gathered on shore, awaiting the arrival of the schooner. As she came barreling down on a sandbar, those on shore naturally expected her to lower her sails.

"What's the matter," cried a veteran sailor, as the ship continued on its collision course, "is Captain Zeiber mad? He's going to run her aground!"

The coastguardsmen stared in equal amazement, unable to move. Surely the captain would bring her about.

"We'd better get out there, boys," said one of them under his breath. "He's going to be in trouble fast, if he doesn't do something."

Before they could move, however, the *J.C. Cousins* hit the sandbar with a shudder, burying her bows deep in the sand. With a loud groan she twisted at an angle and lay panting, uncertainly imbedded in the sand.

The coastguardsmen reached the stricken ship first. They boarded her cautiously, as she was in an extremely unstable position. On board they found no signs of struggle or panic. The lifeboat was still neatly tied in place.

"Captain Zeiber!" cried the men, fearing that he had been injured. "Captain Zeiber!" they cried again.

Silence.

"Something funny's going on here," muttered one of the men. "I don't like it one bit."

"Is anyone aboard!"

Again, silence.

Still picking their way cautiously, the men went below. There they found a meal all prepared, and still warm. But no sign of any crew.

In an ashtray a lighted cigar was burning slowly. There was no sign of its smoker.

An inspection of the cabins revealed that all were in order, with no indications of struggle or disorderly retreat. And all were, without exception, devoid of human life.

"Someone check the log—maybe there's a clue. They couldn't have just vanished!"

But perusal of the log was equally fruitless. The boat was searched, the sea was scanned, the beaches were checked for weeks for washed-up bodies. But no one ever solved the mystery.

These strange disappearances—and there are many more like them—have sent many modern researchers to their mental drawing boards. After practical explanations have eliminated some of the cases, a disturbing number remain, mockingly enigmatic in their refusal to be explained away by natural phenomena.

Yet another phenomenon of the sea is the possibility of haunted areas of water. It is argued that some of these haunted seas—most notably the Bermuda Triangle—may also be responsible for the floating derelicts. A number of abandoned ships with crews mysteriously deported to never-never land have been found in this area, and it is also the scene of vanished planes and ships and submarines.

If you were to draw a line from Florida to Bermuda, another from Bermuda to Puerto Rico, and yet a third through the Bahamas back to Florida, you would have approximately the area known as the "Bermuda Triangle." It is in this one particular area that many ocean-going vessels and airplanes of all kinds have disappeared without a trace. And the number of those disappearances far exceeds the laws of chance.

In February, 1963, the *Marine Sulphur Queen* made a voyage into oblivion. Leaving the port of Beaumont, Texas, on the way to Norfolk, Virginia, she was last heard from on a routine call from the Dry Tortugas in the Gulf of Mexico. When she became overdue in Norfolk a search party was organized that was later abandoned, having uncovered no clues as to the *Marine Sulphur Queen*'s disappearance. Five days after the search was called off a navy torpedo retriever found a lifejacket and some debris believed to be from the ill-fated tanker. These items were found in the Florida straits, fourteen miles southeast of Key West. Nothing else has ever been found.

In January, 1962, a KB-50 Air Force tanker took off on the runway on its way to the Azores. Shortly afterward, the control tower began receiving weak radio signals from the tanker, indicating that the big plane was having difficulty. The signals became steadily weaker until they faded out completely.

As with the *Marine Sulphur Queen* an extensive search was launched. After an exhaustive 1,700-manhour hunt the Air Force was compelled to admit defeat. No traces were ever found of the missing tanker.

Anyone will be quick to tell you that the Bermuda Triangle is not an isolated area. It is a much-traveled, much-frequented region and connects three heavily populated areas: Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Bahamas.

In a less populated, more remote portion of the sea is located another of those mysterious areas that appear to be haunted. This is the "Devil's Sea" region, located in the Pacific Ocean south of Japan and east of the Bonin Islands. Here, as in the Bermuda Triangle, mysterious disappearances and inexplicable sea disasters occur in numbers far above chance. Ships have sailed into the area never to return, and planes have flown over the region and vanished. Again, little or no wreckage is ever found.

The greatest clue to the Bermuda Triangle mystery came in 1945, when five TBM Avenger torpedo bombers left Fort Lauderdale Naval Air Station for routine maneuvers. Each plane carried a liferaft, and a lifejacket was provided for each man. There were fourteen men, altogether.

The planes had been gone scarcely more than an hour and a half when the control tower picked up a distress call from the flight commander.

"Emergency, emergency," the flight commander radioed. "We seem to be off course. We cannot see land, repeat, cannot see land."

When questioned about their position the commander's voice showed tension.

"We are not sure where we are. It would appear we are lost."

"Assume bearing due west," came the control tower's advice.

"We don't know which way is west," replied the commander with rising panic in his voice. "Everything is somehow . . . strange. Direction is unclear. Even the ocean looks different."

Back at the base the men in the control tower looked at each other in amazement. The planes couldn't be more than 250 miles from the base. And they should not be out of sight of land. The pilots of the planes were all experienced fliers, all with excellent records. The Navy wasted no time after the next radio contact from the lost planes. In mid-transmission the message was abruptly cut off.

Another plane, equipped for rough sea landings, was immediately sent on a rescue mission after the other five. The tower was in contact with the plane without difficulty for twenty minutes. Then a call was sent out to verify the rescue plane's position. The call was repeated for five minutes amid growing alarm. It was never answered.

An enormous search party was mounted, using both Navy and Coast Guard cutters. Assistance was obtained from the British Royal Air Force, and soon over three hundred planes were scouring the area. Day after day the search continued; inquiries were held; no possibility was overlooked. But in the end the authorities could only conclude that the planes had "vanished into thin air."

Such strange occurrences in such a well-traveled region have prompted many theories. The most staggering of these is the time-warp theory, closely tied in with the "hole in the sky" theory. Could it be possible that there exists in this region a trapdoor to another dimension? One with a magnetic pull that would render all navigational aids, such as compasses, useless? If so, would it then be possible for a ship—or plane—to slip through the opening . . . and out of it? What if there were such a thing as a time warp, into which a ship would be drawn at the time of its "death." The ship could then enter onto a time track through which other people could occasionally peer. These others might then see the tragedy-ridden ship frozen in its final act upon that time track, be that final act mutiny, shipwreck, or engulfing flames.

Consider, finally, the events surrounding the tragic end of the *Lady Luvibund.*

It was February 13, 1748, and a happy Captain Simon Reed set forth for Oporto, Portugal. The captain had good reason to be festive, as it was his honeymoon. Inside his brightly decorated cabin he, his bride, and a group of friends were celebrating the joyous event.

On deck, though, there was one who did not share the captain's happiness. He was First Mate John Rivers, and he darkly cursed Simon Reed for marrying the only girl he had ever loved. Reed, unaware of Rivers' affection for the girl, had even had his first mate as best man. This was a pain and humiliation that Rivers could not tolerate. As the ship approached the Goodwin Sands, a notorious ship's graveyard located off the coast of Kent, England, John Rivers saw his opportunity for revenge. Approaching the helmsman, he informed him that he would take over the wheel. The helmsman could go below.

As soon as the deck was clear the first mate grimly set his jaw. With a deliberate motion he turned the vessel around and headed for shore. While the merry party progressed unaware below, Rivers drove the *Lady Luvibund* into the bars and shoals at full speed. Trapped below decks, the captain, his bride, and all of their friends perished. Every person on board died as the ship broke up on the shoals.

At the inquiry the mate's mother revealed her son's love for the captain's wife, and his vow for vengeance, even if he lost his own life in its pursuit. Witnesses on the shore testified that the ship deliberately ran aground.

The story might have ended there if it had not been for an angry captain's report to authorities exactly fifty years later to the day. On February 1, 1798, Captain James Westlake of the coasting vessel *Edenbridge* complained that he had almost collided with another ship off the Goodwin Sands. The captain was furious and demanded that the officers of the other ship be arrested.

"The crew was obviously drunk," Captain Westlake spouted. "There were sounds of a party going on, and our shouts could not be heard over their loud talking and laughter. It took all of our effort to avoid an almost certain crash with them."

When the authorities questioned the neighboring fisherman, they were told that the ship was a ghost that had broken up as they watched. They had hurried to the scene to give assistance, but when they arrived there was no sign of any wreckage.

A half century later, on the same date, an American schooner was in the vicinity of the gay party ship. The horrified members of the crew watched as the *Lady Luvibund* repeated her desperate plunge to death. When rescue boats were launched, no evidence of a wreck could be found.

Fifty years later, in 1848, and then again in 1948, local people on shore watched the unhappy ghost ship repeat her dash to destruction. If all goes according to schedule, spectators on February 13, 1998, should also see the hapless *Lady Luvibund.*

This case, more than any other, seems to support the time-warp theory. The clues to a warp in our time-space continuum can be seen in this vessel's fifty-year cycle. Indeed, it is almost as though the curtains of time slide back momentarily and allow those nearby a view similar to a glance into a peep box. After the tragedy has been reenacted, the curtains slide back into place and all is as it was. And who is to say if these glimpses of past misfortunes are for the benefit of the actors or of the audience?

IV

Animals That Talk, Spell, and Find Their Way Home

Over forty years ago the feats of an apparently ordinary horse that seemed to be able to read, work complicated problems in mathematics, and communicate with human beings served as a major topic of conversation for millions of Americans. Lady, a three-year-old mare owned by Mrs. C. D. Fonda of Richmond, Virginia, was thoroughly studied in 1928 by Dr. J. B. Rhine of Duke University and Dr. William McDougall, a leading psychologist. For over a month the two scientists conducted a most amazing series of tests with the seemingly gifted black and white horse.

Even with Mrs. Fonda removed from the scene and with a screen placed between the horse and the experimenters, Lady was able to pick out numbers in answer to arithmetic problems and to select alphabet blocks to spell out words in response to conversational questions.

By nudging forward the proper blocks, Lady was able to carry on a simulated dialogue with anyone who desired to question her. Such rapid and unerring facility led Dr.

Rhine to conclude that animals were able to read the thoughts of humans via some extrasensory capacity.

In a *New York Times* article of May 28, 1928, the writer noted that it seemed a bit unkind to declare Lady a telepathic horse. "This makes it seem," he pointed out, "that Lady performs her miracles merely by mind reading, whereas the investigations might well prove that she understands English and arithmetic on her own account. . . ."

English is not the only language of horses. Karl Krall of Elberfeld, Germany, had three horses that animal psychologist Dr. Edward Claparede of the University of Geneva, Switzerland, declared ". . . able to perform many of the tasks which are required of an intelligent schoolboy of fourteen."

Krall's horses were found to be able to count, add, subtract, multiply, use decimals, read, spell, and respond to questions in a simplified language he had developed for them to use. Once, when the horses were asked to give the cube root of 5,832, one of the horses stamped out the correct answer—18—while university scholars were still figuring out the solution on paper.

In 1909, Krall had inherited a horse named Clever Hans from Wilhelm Von Osten, a man who firmly believed in the high intelligence of animals and who had taught Clever Hans a wide variety of skills. Krall had come to accept Von Osten's theories and immediately purchased two Arabian stallions to train. One of the horses seemed naturally adept at mathematics, while the other showed a definite preference for language and spelling.

Such a controversy developed in France, Germany, and England over the true abilities of the trained horses that a commission was appointed to investigate the intellectual capacities of the Elberfeld stallions. Dr. Edward Claparede, one of the leading European authorities on animal psychology, concluded that the horses were not fakes and that they did read and spell and extract cube roots by "rational processes rather than by means of trick signs from their trainer. . . ."

Dr. Claparede emphasized that he could find ". . . nothing whatever to the idea that [Karl Krall] signals the horses either consciously or unconsciously."

Maurice Maeterlinck, the famous Belgian philosopher, was among the group of scientists and scholars who traveled to Elberfeld to investigate Karl Krall's famous thinking horses. Maeterlinck stated that he had investigated the phenomenal animals with the same scrupulous attention he would have given to reporting a criminal trial.

The philosopher wrote that when he saw the horses, he spoke the first word that came into his mind, "Weidenhof," the name of his hotel. Muhamed, one of the Arabian stallions, immediately "wrote" *Weidenhov*. At this point Krall entered the stable and admonished Muhamed for making an error in spelling. The horse at once tapped out the "f."

A Dr. Hamel once gave Muhamed the number 7,890,481 and challenged the animal to produce its fourth root. Within six seconds, Muhamed had tapped out his answer, 53. Dr. Hamel checked with a table and was astonished to find that the horse was correct. It requires eighteen multiplications, ten subtractions, and three divisions to extract the fourth root of a six-figure number. Muhamed, a "dumb" animal, had managed those thirty-one calculations in six seconds.

In July, 1955, Dr. William MacKenzie of Genoa University, president of the Italian Society of Parapsychology, was asked if he remembered the Elberfeld horses from the early days of the century. "Could I forget!" he answered immediately. The only explanation Dr. MacKenzie could offer was that the horses were "mediums," possessed by a reasoning mind superior to their own.

Can dogs, cats, horses—can all animals employ rational thought processes? Can certain animals learn to

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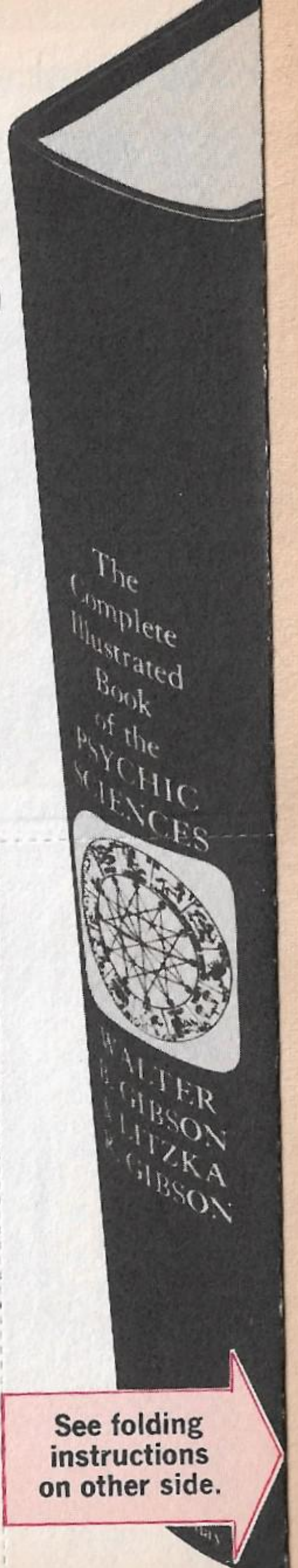
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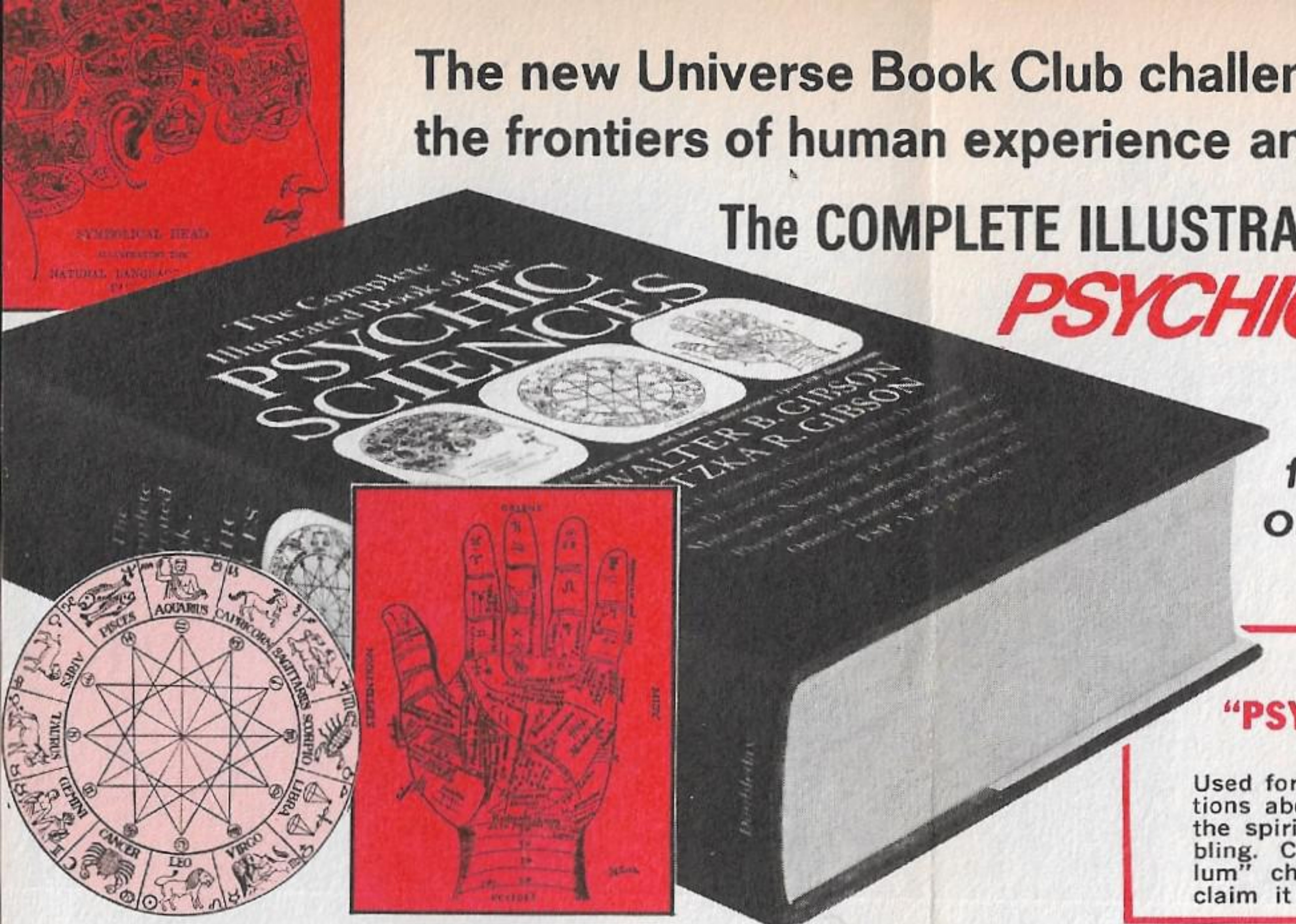

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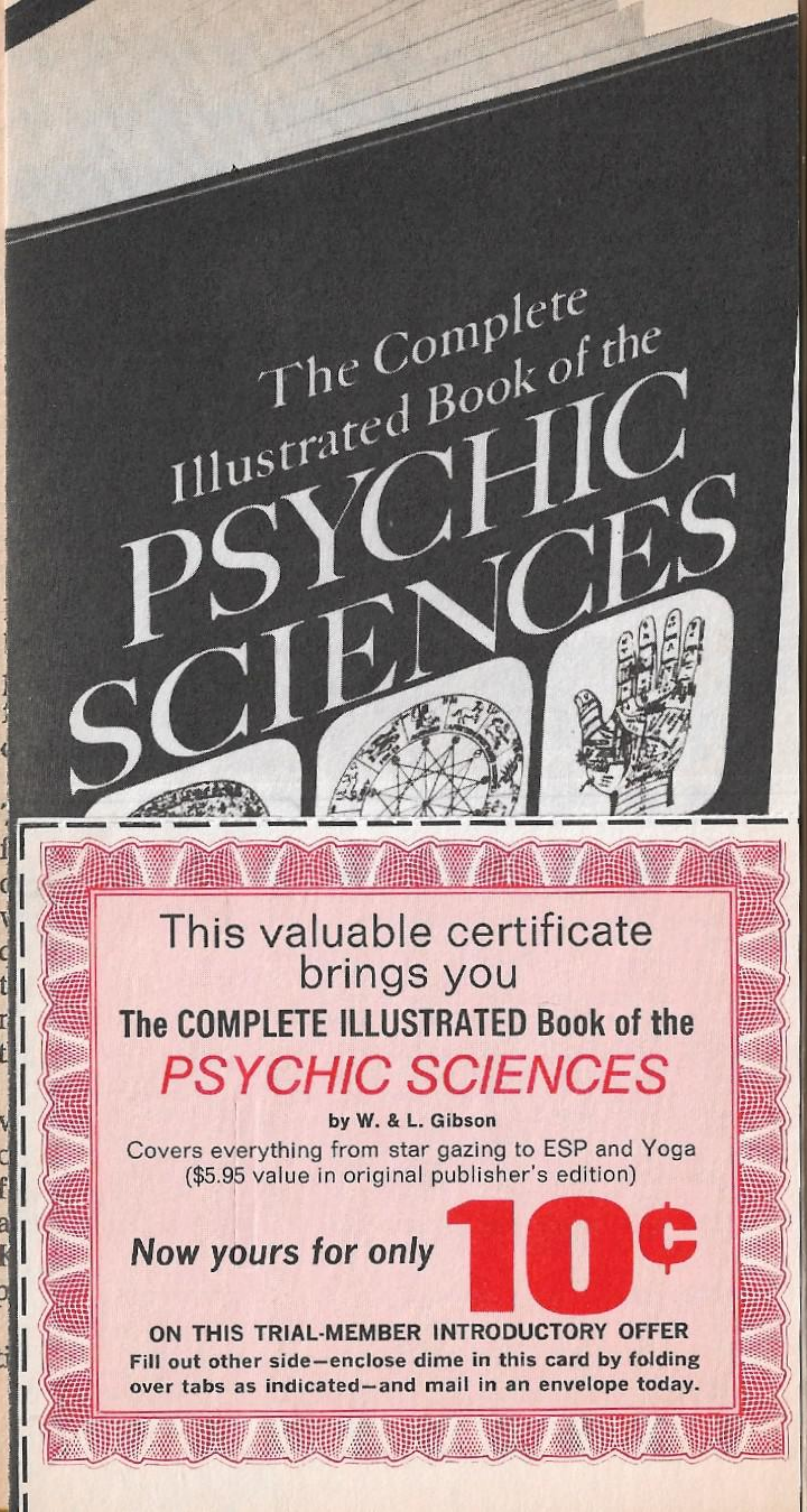

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talk? That is, can they actually learn to converse, and not simply imitate human talk-sounds as do parrots, parakeets, and mynah birds?

Syndicated columnist Ann Landers once published a letter from a woman who insisted that she heard a neighbor's poodle asking to be let outside. Miss Landers presented the letter in her usual spirited manner and was at once flooded by letters from readers who contended that they, too, had talking pets.

Excerpts from some of the letters included such comments as:

". . . We have a 13-year-old rat terrier who says 'I want out.' "

"Our dog . . . says 'Howdy partner,' 'Vas you der, Cholly?' and 'Good night all.' It all started when Heinz [the dog] sneezed and my husband said *'Gesundheit.'* We almost fell over when the dog repeated after him, *'Gesundheit.'* "

". . . Our schnauzer speaks Italian. He says, 'Mamma Signora.' "

One day in the spring of 1965, Rudy Gallucci was called to service the furnace at the Genova residence in Torrance, California.

"Will your dog nip me?" he asked Mrs. Genova, warily eying the small Chihuahua sitting on the porch. Gallucci had been bitten before by dogs that appeared friendly.

Mrs. Genova assured the serviceman that Pepe was of a gentle disposition. Gallucci took her at her word, walked down into the basement with the Chihuahua at his heels.

"Well, how are you, Pepe?" he asked, wanting to test the dog's true spirit before he turned his back on him and got to work.

"I love you," came the reply in a high-pitched voice.

Gallucci's mouth dropped open, his eyes blinked.

"Hello, how are you?" the dog wanted to know.

"I could feel my hair rise," Gallucci said in a local trade newspaper, *Gas News*. "I was actually looking at the dog and he looked me square in the eyes. I saw his mouth open and heard the voice coming out of it."

The serviceman picked up the dog and laughed.

"I love you," the dog repeated.

Gallucci thought that perhaps an operation of some kind had been performed on the dog, "something like crows who will talk if you split their tongues." He went to Mrs. Genova with his questions.

The woman laughingly assured him that Pepe could talk and she allowed him to take the dog back to his office so that the other servicemen might enjoy the Chihuahua's high-pitched pronouncements of love.

When Clare Adele Lambert read of Rudy Gallucci's experience, she called Mrs. Genova and told the woman that she simply had to see and hear Pepe for herself. Mrs. Genova graciously extended an invitation to the writer to visit them. The account of that remarkable visit appeared in the July, 1966, issue of *Fate* magazine.

"Hel-*loo*, hel-*loo*, how are you?" the dog greeted the writer and her friend when they called at the Genova residence.

Mrs. Genova told them that she had first heard Pepe say, "I love you-oo" one day when she had been hanging some things out to dry on the line. She called for her husband to come outside and the dog mouthed: "How are you? How are you?"

Pepe had been examined by veterinarians who theorized that the extra length of his palate and a peculiar formation of his larynx, combined with a flexibility and mobility of his throat muscles, might give him the ability to produce sounds. Clare Adele Lambert noted that Mrs. Genova spoke to the dog with exaggerated mouth and tongue movements.

When the writer bent close to watch the dog's throat muscles move, she saw his tongue curve toward the roof of his mouth, as if he were making a conscious effort to form syllables. "This tongue movement," she rightly observed, "is most unusual. Dogs keep their tongues down on their lower jaws when emitting sounds."

Clare Lambert said that Pepe sings rather than talks, "although it is really a combination of both." When the dog was seen to speak, he seemed to concentrate his entire tiny being on his listener. When left alone, Pepe happily licked at his fur and ate his food.

The present writer has a friend who seems to be truthful and honest, yet insists that a talking cat once paid his family a visit when he was a small boy.

They were first alerted by a scratching at the door. When the door was answered, a large black cat asked, "Come in?" Once admitted into the home, the cat pleaded: "Milk? Milk?"

A large saucer of milk was produced and the strange visitor proceeded to attack it lustily with a long pink tongue. After the bowl had been dealt with, the cat allowed the children to pet it as it lay and purred before the kitchen stove. Then, suddenly, it got to its feet, proclaimed: "Go now! Out!"

The children begged their father to allow them to keep the cat, but such a decision did not seem to be his to make. "Go now! Out!" the cat insisted in a louder tone.

The father opened the door and permitted the cat to continue on its self-appointed rounds. My friend said that they never saw the strange animal again.

Mrs. C. K. Wilderson of north Denver claims to have a dog that plays the piano. The Denver *Post* described Tramp as an eleven-year-old ham performer that took to the keyboard at the slightest encouragement. Striding to the piano, Tramp was said to sit down and begin to bang away with both paws. The dog is also reported to keep time with his tail and to yowl lustily in "song" to the accompaniment of his piano artistry.

Alan McElwaine of the London *Sunday Times* wrote of a dog named Arli that seemed to have mastered the keyboard of a typewriter, thereby becoming a literary, rather than a musical, pooch. Arli was a six-year-old English setter owned by Mrs. Elizabeth Mann Borgese, daughter of the late author Thomas Mann.

According to McElwaine, the setter used its nose to punch out words of up to four letters. Arli did not suddenly begin to display his talent for writing of his own accord. Mrs. Borgese admits that she laboriously taught her pet to hunt-and-peck. Arli began with "dog" and "cat," worked up to "bone," go bed," "good dog," "bad dog," and so forth.

A fifteen-month-old cocker spaniel with the awesome monicker of Ginjo Roughneck Sweettooth Chester (Dog-Dog for short) was able to bark out the answers to arithmetic problems, according to his owner, Earl W. Chester of Sacramento, California. Chester put Dog-Dog through his paces for David Deas of the Sacramento *Bee,* and the journalist conceded that the dog's arithmetic was grade-A.

Chester told the reporter that Dog-Dog's ability was not an act. "It's a psychic phenomenon," he contended. "How does he understand what I'm saying to him? We haven't been able to figure it out. He knows these things already and it's just a matter of studying it and bringing it out."

April, a three-year-old terrier-Chihuahua, might be completely illiterate, but she more than earned her keep by saving lives.

Mrs. Eddie Baker of Gallup, New Mexico, April's owner, stated that she was awakened one night in the spring of 1966 by the dog and was led into a son's bedroom to find the boy hemorrhaging and choking on blood.

A few months later, Mrs. Baker was led outside by the barking dog and directed to an old icebox. When the puzzled woman pried open the door to investigate, she found her seven-year-old son unconscious and near death from asphyxiation.

Then there are those animals that, like Lassie, always manage to find their way home.

In February, 1966, a fifteen-pound black Persian cat named Blackie that had accidentally been left in Florida by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bower during Thanksgiving of the year before, returned to their home in Forked River, New Jersey.

In the spring of 1966, a dog named Smokey found its owners, Mr. and Mrs. Phillip R. Bean of Seattle, after having been parted from them for three and a half years and after the Beans had changed their place of residence twice.

Baby, a cocker spaniel–poodle mixture that suffered from epileptic seizures, managed to find its way home to the John Donegans of Addison, Illinois, on September 9, 1969, after having been "dognapped" eight months before. To complicate matters for Baby, the Donegans had moved to Addison from Melrose Park in the interim, and the dog had to find the trailer house of Mrs. Catherine Geitz, Mrs. Donegan's mother, to appeal for help.

"I think someone stole her [last Christmas] and she had a fit and they didn't understand what it was so they threw her out," Donegan told the Chicago *Tribune.*

"She looked terrible when she got to my mother's," Mrs. Donegan said. "Her nose was sunburned and swollen, her feet were raw, and two back teeth were broken, but it was our Baby. She still had her dog tags on."

Mrs. Geitz, Mrs. Donegan's mother, lived over fifteen miles from the Donegans' new home, and Baby had visited "Grandma's" house with the family before her disappearance.

"Now our family is together," Mrs. Donegan said.

Walt Disney did a marvelous job with *Incredible Journey,* the true yarn about two dogs and a cat that somehow found their way through a strange wilderness to arrive at their human family's new home several hundred miles from the old homestead. It is indeed a loss to the lovers of animal lore motion pictures that no one has ever filmed the story of Hector.

Hector, a large black and white terrier, offers us one of the greatest stories in the annals of pets-that-came-home-tales.

Second Officer Harold Kildall of the S.S. *Hanley* was busy seeing to the loading of cargo on the morning of April 20, 1922, when he saw the terrier walking up the gangplank. The dog walked about on deck, sniffed at a number of various objects, then returned to shore on the Government Dock in Vancouver, Washington.

From time to time that day, Kildall noticed the black and white terrior inspecting the four other ships at dock. He was intrigued by the curious actions of the dog, but he was too busy to pay the animal more than casual attention. The next day, however, when the *Hanley* was on its way to Yokohama, Second Officer Kildall was surprised to find that the big terrier had managed to stow away aboard ship.

Fortunately for Hector, Captain Warner liked dogs. Both he and his crew made the terrier welcome, but the big dog remained aloof. He was willing to work for his fare, though—he stood watch with Kildall each night.

Three weeks later, the *Hanley* was unloading timber in Yokohama bay. Kildall took an interest in Hector's behavior as their vessel pulled up next to the S. S. *Simaloer* a Dutch ship that was also unloading timber. Two officers and some crewmen from the Dutch ship boarded a sampan and began to move toward the customs landing. As the sampan passed close to the *Hanley,* Hector began to leap about and bark excitedly. At the same time, one of the passengers of the sampan spotted the big terrier and began to wave his arms and shout.

Within moments, Hector was reunited with his master, W. H. Mante, second officer of the *Simaloer*. The man and his dog had been separated at the Government Dock in Vancouver and the Dutch ship had sailed away before Mante could find Hector. One can only guess at the strange ability that enabled Hector to select the one ship among many that would take him across the ocean to the precise spot where his master would be waiting.

And now we shall turn to a former wrestler, Marine jujitsu instructor, sharpshooter, champion swimmer, and merchant seaman who has become a real-life "Dr. Doolittle." Fred Kimball talks to the animals—via mental telepathy—and they talk back.

In the *Gardena Valley News* (Gardena, California) for September 29, 1963, Kimball admitted that it was still a bit strange to be able to read the mind of, for example, a seagull. "Of course, most of the time they don't think too much," he commented.

Only a few days before the interview, however, Kimball had "talked" a gopher out of its hole by offering it a yellow flower. First he tried to bargain for its emergence by offering it some grass, but the gopher held out for the yellow flower that was just too far away from its hole to fetch in perfect safety. A group of onlookers were amazed when the gopher came out of its hole and ate the flower from Kimball's hand. The rodent retreated only when a four-year-old boy got too close.

"He said he didn't trust the boy," Kimball explained. "He said the boy was too young to be responsible for his actions."

Somehow Kimball appears to be able to tune into the consciousness of animals and communicate with them.

Once a friend in Florida needed some money in order to get married. Kimball talked to the horses at Hialeah and picked fourteen winners out of the seventeen races.

"You can't always win them all," he said, shrugging off the three losses. "The horse may be on the level, but he may not have a good rider."

Several years ago, Kimball was with the Army Engineers in Panama, chopping roads through the heavy jungle. "I seemed to have a 'jungle instinct,' as they called it," Kimball recalled for the October 11, 1963, issue of the Idyllwild, California, *Town Crier*. "I could sense when poisonous snakes were too close, so they made me lead man. That meant I was out in front with the snakes.

"We had snakes that hung in foliage at about the level of a man's head," he went on. "One strike from them and you didn't have long to live. Some men were so unnerved they'd start to cry. Because I could sense the snakes before we could see them, the men felt safer with me up front."

Kimball maintains that pets are able to store up vast memory banks and it is this information that he taps. It is not difficult to talk with dogs, he contends, because they use basic terms. In communicating with them, Kimball uses symbols to learn their problems and complaints.

"Dogs often complain because their masters do not demand enough of them," Kimball says. "Dogs like to be trained and active. Some even become a bit bored with their human family."

The versatile "Dr. Doolittle" cautions dog owners that when a dog appears merely to be sleeping in front of a warm fireplace, he may really have both ears tuned into family relations. And what is more, dogs can remember things that happened in their human family in the past.

"I don't really talk to them," Kimball has explained, referring to his oft-demonstrated ability to calm and apparently communicate with troubled domestic and wild animals. "I focus on their minds with mental telepathy. The animal has in its memory certain things the owner may have forgotten. The animal gives me a mental picture of what it wants to say and then I 'translate' it for people. The language of animals is very much like the language of children."

As Kimball sees it, modern man simply does not ask enough of Mother Nature. "The divine nature knocks gently at the door of your consciousness and does not force itself upon you. If one is not receptive or refuses to open the door, this divine nature recedes. Many people shut out a great deal from their lives because of conventional fears. . . .

"Anyone can develop his senses and intuition to a higher degree. The simple man finds his way out of the woods while the scholar gets lost. The intellectual needs to listen more often to his heart!"

Kimball contends that it is within one's own heart that he will find the ability to "talk" to animals.

V

The Perplexing Mystery of Vanishing Islands

Sarah Ann Island, located just north of the equator, had been duly noted by eager astronomers as directly in the path of a total solar eclipse scheduled for June 8, 1937. The scientists were eager to set up an observation post on the island, as there were no others in the vicinity.

Dutifully, the U.S. Pacific Fleet went out in the summer of 1937 in search of the island. But the astronomers were disappointed in their quest—Sarah Ann Island had vanished and has never been located again.

Imagine the perplexity of Captains Cornwallis and Horsburgh. These two men, at different times, sailed over an area lying 600 miles northwest of Tristan de Cunha in the South Atlantic, the charted site of Saxemberg Island. In vain did these men seek the island discovered by Dutch navigator Lindeman in 1670. Nor could they put their failure to find the island down to the navigational problems of the seventeenth century, for the island was reported again in 1804. Captain Galloway of the American schooner *Fanny* described the island as low-lying and supporting a high peaked hill in the center. He had the island in view for four hours. The island was seen again in 1816 by Captain Head of the *True Briton,* under English registry. The *True Briton* had Saxemberg in her sights for a total of six hours. Captain Head, too, remarked on the peaked hill in the middle.

But when Captain Cornwallis approached the area in 1821 there was no island to be seen. Several years later Captain Horsburgh explored the same area of sea and was equally dumbfounded. To add to the confusion, soundings taken at the location revealed a depth of 2,000 fanthoms.

What happened to Sarah Ann and Saxemberg islands? Both land masses were seen by more than one oceangoing vessel, and both were geographically located on all official maps and charts. There was so little reason to doubt the existence of Sarah Ann that scientists were even planning on building an observation post on it. Yet subsequent voyages to these phantom islands failed to locate them.

The phenomenon of vanishing islands has been with us for centuries. This chapter will include some of the more classic cases on record, present some of the more popular speculations as to these islands' whereabouts, and question if they ever existed at all.

One of the theories states that the Pacific Ocean bed, which is the region reporting more vanishing islands than any other, is extremely unstable. The floor of the ocean contains many faults, and is the scene of many volcanic eruptions. Islands are frequently formed by these volcanic thrusts, some of them coming from depths of 16,000 feet.

Coming from such an unstable source, and formed largely of porous volcanic material, these islands obviously have only a tenuous hold on existence. They are completely at the mercy of wind and wave erosion. And Neptune, who gave birth to them, may follow the example of his father Cronus, and swallow his spawn in another submarine upheaval.

Such a situation is amply illustrated by the birth of two islands rising together out of the Pacific, roughly two hundred miles south of Tokyo. In February, 1946, a British warship in the vicinity observed the birth of these islands, and noted that the cones reached a height of fifty feet. The islands occuped the space of approximately one square mile.

It was decided that the two cones represented one land mass, and the British Admiralty appropriately named it Urania Island, after the vessel that had discovered it.

Scarcely two months later, however, Urania Island had degenerated to a shoal occupying a considerably larger area.

It is precisely this kind of appearing and disappearing that has confounded cartographers and geographers for decades, causing them to alternately place, and then remove, islands from their maps.

Another set of mystery islands met with such a fate when they were discovered early in the 1760's by the sailing vessel *Aurora.* The captain discovered them somewhere southeast of the Falklands and named them the Auroras, after his ship.

After this initial sighting they were seen by several other vessels, and were eventually surveyed by a Danish ship especially equipped for the task. Their position was entered on all official maps, and they would have remained there had not a certain captain sailing through the area decided to visit the islands. He carefully plotted his course and arrived at the place marked "Auroras" on the map. But there were no Auroras. The captain searched the area in astonishment and was forced to conclude that, for all practical purposes at least, the islands had vanished.

Separate searches were conducted in 1820 and 1822, and other vessels have also explored the general vicinity, but no clue to their existence has ever shown up.

Because they were seen by so many ships before their "disappearance" was noted, it is believed the islands did at one time exist. The question remains, where did they go?

Part of this perplexing problem may be caused by errors in navigation. Such errors caused the Solomon islands to be lost for nearly two centuries after their discovery in 1567. They were finally rediscovered in 1767, and were strategically important in World War II.

For the span of a few days in its enigmatic career, Easter Island, with its grim carved stone faces, was similarly misplaced. In 1928 a stunned captain informed the world via ships radio that Easter Island had vanished. When a gunboat from Valparaiso, Chile, came out to investigate, the island was found at its charted latitude and longitude.

Admittedly, errors occur and should not be overlooked when initially investigating the disappearance of an island. But what would you do with the classic case of Bouvet and Thompson islands?

In 1739, Antarctic explorer Pierre des Loziers Bouvet discovered an island approximately 1,500 miles from the Cape of Good Hope, which he described as being five miles in diameter and partially covered by a glacier.

After its initial discovery Bouvet Island played cat-and-mouse with Captain James Cook in 1772 and 1775, and with Captain Furneaux in 1774, neither of whom was able to locate it. The island's existence was in grave doubt when in 1808 two sealing vessels, the *Snow Swan* and the *Otter,* both reported having seen it. To further erase all former doubts, in 1822 Captain Benjamin Morrell claimed to have landed upon the island and killed a number of seals.

In 1825 two whaling vessels visited Bouvet. One of these was the *Sprightly,* whose skipper sighted additional land masses. Captain George Norris completely circumnavigated an island he called Thompson, and noted three more rocky islets that he named the Chimneys. All four islands were located forty-five miles northeast of Bouvet.

For a time the islands were recorded on all the Admiralty charts, until two expeditions—one in 1843 and another in 1845—failed to find any sign of them. The captains of these two vessels agreed that they were phantoms, and the islands were accordingly removed from the charts.

But Bouvet Island refused to be treated in such a manner. In the ensuing decades it was sighted by three other vessels. The captain of one ship even drew several sketches of it. Confusion reigned. When the island was on the maps, it was not to be found. When it was removed, captains kept bumping into it.

Finally, in 1898, the German ship *Valdivia* definitely located Bouvet Island—exactly where Pierre Bouvet had said it was 154 years earlier. The *Valdivia* failed to descry Captain Norris' Thompson Island or the Chimneys, however, leaving their existence still under the shadow of doubt.

Subsequently, three more vessels positioned Bouvet Island, and as of 1917, it has officially existed and is marked on the charts.

Thompson Island and the Chimneys, which Norris plotted as being forty-five miles north-northeast of Bouvet, remain unaccounted for to this day. Perhaps they, too, will in the future be rediscovered, occupying the same place allotted to them by Captain Norris.

For the case of St. Juan de Lisboa, another spectral isle drenched in history and confusion, I am indebted to W. N. Neil, who published his account in the November, 1921, issue of the *Occult Review*.

This island is supposedly located somewhere in the southern India Ocean, positioned in the general area east of Madagascar and south of the Mascarenes.

For a century and a half this independent little island managed to elude the French government in its efforts to add it to French possessions in the Mascarene archipelago. But St. Juan de Lisboa stubbornly refused to go along with the group, and remains to this day a bafflement to geographers.

The first mention of St. Juan de Lisboa came from M. de la Roche Saint Andre, who was sent to Madagascar in 1655. Using a Portuguese map of the area he searched for the island, but was unable to find it. For a time interest in the island waned.

Then around 1704, a large number of men included the island in their memoirs, giving careful descriptions of its shape and appearance. These men fanned the flame of interest in the place and there was great official encouragement to add the island to the crown for the glory of France.

In 1721 Louis XV ordered the Chevalier de Nyon to take possession of St. Juan in the name of France. Though de Nyon searched extensively, he was forced to turn back in disappointment. The island was not to be found.

When French Colonial Governor Labourdonnais set sail for his new post, his list of instructions included the finding of St. Juan and its annexation. Labourdonnais gave up in total bafflement.

The French government was convinced that the island existed, but ships' captains and geographers of the day were beginning to grow doubtful. It was at this point in its long game of hide-and-seek that the wily island decided to spark interest in itself again.

In 1772, a certain Donjon, second-in-command of the *Bougainville*, jubilantly reported that he had found the elusive island and fixed its precise position. During a violent storm on April 27, M. Donjon had sighted the island and even completed a rough sketch of its outline.

Hooked once again, the French ordered the Chevalier de Saint Felix of the *Heure du Berger* to hoist anchor immediately and, accompanied by the *Curieuse,* to set sail for the spot indicated by Donjon. In 1773 the chavalier confessed his defeat. The island was simply no longer there.

In the same year yet another fruitless attempt was made by the *Etoile du Matin,* and a few years later, French seaman Kerguelen churned up the sea almost inch by inch, but all to no avail. The island was not receiving visitors and was evidently incommunicado. Finally, in 1782, Forval de Grenville applied for a ten-year concession of the island. The concession was granted, though the expedition never took place.

After de Grenville's failure even to start searching, the island was conceded to Advisse des Ruisseaux, in 1787. The French Revolution intervened before he could get underway, but Napoleon's accession to power in 1799 ended the revolution and freed des Ruisseaux for his expedition. Although he scoured the area for miles around, frustration and defeat eventually overcame him, too.

That was the last attempt made by the French to find and annex St. Juan. Shortly thereafter their power in the Indian Ocean was broken, and the triumphant English made no effort to discover the mysterious island that had so frustrated their defeated foes.

Amateur sleuths and seasoned sailors have striven for an explanation of the St. Juan enigma. That it was a volcanic mass rising and then falling beneath the waves is one explanation. There is also the possibility of human error. In the case of St. Juan, however, the latter seems improbable. Too many men searched too hard and too unrelentingly for us to consider that the island was somehow overlooked.

Nor is it likely that St. Juan was a floating island. These are mostly associated with lakes, although they are not unknown in salt water. Floating islands rise from the deep and, being unanchored, change position constantly, until they return again from whence they came.

Other investigators blame the problem on the Admiralty itself. It was not at all uncommon, argue these researchers, for clerks to put imaginary islands on the charts, naming them after their family and friends. If these imaginary isles were on untraveled routes, it could be centuries before their deception was uncovered.

However, in the specific case of St. Juan de Lisboa, the theory that is generally accepted today is that the island was invented by Arabian pirates to confuse the Portuguese. By giving "St. Juan de Lisboa" as their place of rendezvous and storehouse for their booty, they could use secluded spots on other islands without fear of attack.

At the conclusion of Neil's article in the *Occult Review,* he speculates upon the mirage aspect of vanishing islands and moves into the psychic realm, wondering if a mirage might be the image of a primeval island as it was before sinking back into the watery main:

> Yet though the actuality was once again covered by the waves its essence might now and then clothe itself in all its old verdure, its mountain peaks, and its blue bays, and become visible to some eye specially attuned to the invisible. It makes one glad to think that somewhere out there lies an isle where Vanderdecken and his ghostly crew can land to stretch their weary limbs now and then after being buffeted for endless years by the currents and tempests that crowd the sea around the Cape of Storms. St. Juan de Lisboa may be—to quote Lafcadio Hearn—"like one of those phantom cities of Spanish America, swallowed up centuries ago by earthquakes, but reappearing at long intervals to delude travelers."

VI

People Who Walk into the Past

I left work late one night at the mill [a correspondent wrote to me]. I was driving along the regular route which I took to and from my job when all of a sudden I didn't recognize the buildings around me.

I thought, "Jeez, have I taken a wrong turn?" But I've lived in this city for seven years, and I know it pretty doggone well. And I don't see how I could have taken a wrong turn on a route that I drive twice a day six days a week.

Everything seemed quiet, too quiet. I clicked on the radio, fiddled with the knob, but only got static. There was only one other car in sight, and that was an old one, really old, parked in front of a diner named "Henry's."

Then I hit the intersection, and I had a funny feeling like going through cool water. But from that point on, I was all right. I knew where I was, and that was just where I should have been all along.

Now I have driven that route a couple of thousand times, and I have never seen a diner named "Henry's." I asked around at the mill, but no one had ever heard of a diner with that name in the whole town.

My question is, did I drive into another dimension that night, or did I drive down that street the way it might have been several years ago? No, I wasn't drinking.

From time to time, it seems that in some way not yet understood, certain individuals have suddenly found themselves in restored scenes of the past. Now, such claims bring up all sorts of rather weighty questions. For instance, if the past returns, where does the present go?

If my correspondent was really driving down a street that had actually existed several years before, where did the street that currently exists disappear to? Or is it possible for one time dimension to operate simultaneously alongside of, or within, another?

What about the question that has been asked again and again in numerous time-travel science-fiction stories. Can someone from one time dimension interact with someone from another time dimension? What would have happened if my correspondent had run over and killed someone from the earlier time period in which he appears to have been driving?

In most trips on the time track, the inhabitants of the earlier time period seem to take no notice at all of those from the present, who may observe a dramatic battle scene or a quaint country fair. It seems that the observer does not actually step "into" the past; rather, in some as yet unfathomed manner, a scene from the past is recreated in precise, photographic detail, as if some ethereal motion picture film were activated and projected upon some kind of atmospheric screen.

If energy, like matter, is indestructible, the vibrations of every word and deed ever uttered or enacted might still echo in the psychic ether. In the same manner that the emotions of certain individuals might seem to permeate a room or a house and cause a "ghost" to be seen by those possessing telepathic affinity, so certain emotionally charged scenes of the past might become imprinted upon the psychic ether and reactivated by those individuals with the proper attunement. Nearly everyone has observed that some locales definitely have built up their own "atmospheres" over the years and such auras might provoke definite sensations of uneasiness, fear, discomfort, or happiness.

But if such trips on the time track are merely some kind of super panoramic Cinemascope "ghost," then they are exceedingly solid, hardly the ectoplasmic wisps of spooky stuff that make up the denizens of traditional hauntings. There are testimonials from people who have walked into offices from another era, driven on roads that no longer exist, and witnessed battles and fistfights from previous decades and centuries.

In a classic case, Miss Edith Oliver found herself observing an English village fair on a rainy night in October, 1916. She had driven off the main road and traveled up long stone avenues to the megaliths near Avebury. She spent some time watching laughing townsfolk walking merrily about, then resumed her drive from Devizes to Swindon in Wiltshire.

It was not until nine years later that Miss Oliver had occasion to revisit Avebury. At this time, she not only learned that the village fairs had been abolished in 1850, but that the particular avenue on which she had driven had disappeared before 1800.

If we accept Miss Oliver's testimony as a truthful one, then we must accept the disturbing fact that bits and pieces of the past may return again from time to time and resume physical reality—at least temporarily.

A few years ago, Russell Kirk told an interesting story to the *Los Angeles Times* concerning his quest for a lost street.

According to Kirk, he discovered the quaint little street one night in 1949 while exploring the ancient English city of York in order to kill some time between trains. As he was rushing back to the station, he happened to glance down a short street that was lined with beautiful seventeenth- and eighteenth-century houses. The handsomely kept homes rose flush with the sidewalk and the dimly lighted street looked as enchanting and inviting as a scene from a living fairy tale.

But Kirk had to catch a train and he had no time to dally, however much he might have liked to spend some time wandering along the picturesque street. He made himself a promise to return to York in a few months and indulge himself in a long leisurely stroll down the enticing street.

Kirk stated that he has been back to York at least once every year since 1949. He vowed that he is now thoroughly familiar with every street and lane and practically every house in York, but he has yet to rediscover the quaint, beautiful little street. However, in a deteriorated section of York, he has found the remains of a once elegant street that resembles the one he glimpsed so briefly on that night in 1949. The quarter is called St. Saviourgate, and a clergyman of York told Kirk that the section has been desolate since about 1914. The bombs of World War II shattered what few buildings remained standing.

Kirk admitted that he has often wondered what might have happened if he had decided to miss his London train that strange night and had wandered into the street. What might have occurred if he had stopped to knock at one of the delightful houses? Would he have stepped into another dimension of time and closed the door upon his own era?

The August, 1967, issue of *Fate* magazine carried an interesting letter from Carolyn Becker, a "time-tripper" from Ebenezer, New York.

"When we built our new home five years ago," she wrote, "we knew our lot on Sunbriar Drive in Ebenezer, N.Y., originally had been part of the Seneca Indian Reservation."

On the night of February 22, 1966, Carolyn Becker went for a walk with her dog along the Cazenovia Creek. Seemingly from out of nowhere came the howl of a strange dog. Her own dog froze, his ears pricked, his tail high, his hackles rising.

"Then on the creek bank appeared a tall pole decorated with cloth strips in vivid colors. A buckskin-clad Indian wearing a strange headdress . . . was strangling a beautiful white dog. As I watched he wrapped its limp body in bright-colored strips of cloth and next he wound strands of wampum about the animal's broken neck. Dimly I discerned glowing campfires and throbbing drums and the smell of tobacco smoke penetrated my senses. . . ."

Soon the scene faded and she stood there shivering in the snow, her own dog whimpering fearfully against her. Later she learned that "somehow time had turned backward, letting me witness the Seneca's New Year Jubilee ceremony, in which a pure white dog was sacrificed for the tribe's sin."

The correspondent claimed that the last time the ceremony took place on those grounds was in 1841, a date she determined by searching the records of the reservation.

A correspondent who drives a truck across the midwestern plains wrote to tell of his coming upon an old wagon train late one night.

> I've been ridden hard about this story, but I know what I saw. Teams of oxen tugging at heavy Conestoga wagons. Men, women, and kids trudging along behind or beside the big wagons. Dogs trotting and nipping at the heels of the horses ridden by a few armed men.
>
> Some guys have said, "Okay, if it was really a wagon train, what was it doing traveling at night? Why weren't they camped in a circle, like in the movies?"
>
> I don't know the answer to that one. Maybe it was some kind of a forced march or something. The people all looked beat. Yes, I could see their faces in the moonlight. It was all that clear.
>
> I had the feeling that if I had stopped—I slowed way down, but I wouldn't stop—I could have heard the creaking of harness and the squeaking of those big wheels. I know a lot of other drivers who have seen weird things on late night runs across the plains.

In August, 1941, Leonard Hall and a number of companions were fishing and camping on the upper Current River in the Ozarks. Sometime before dawn, Hall was awakened by the sound of strange voices. Startled, he opened his eyes to see several figures moving around a roaring fire about one hundred yards from his tent. As he looked about him, he was even more amazed to see that the clearing on the beach was ringed by a dozen campfires.

Most of the shadowy figures were easily recognizable as Indians, naked except for breech clouts. Hall heard the occasional stamp of a horse's hoof, the murmur of voices speaking in many alien tongues. Some of the speech patterns were identifiable as Spanish, and Hall blinked his eyes in wonderment as he noticed that a number of the men seated around the campfires wore the rusted armor of Spanish *conquistadores*.

Hall convinced himself that he was either having a wild dream or else had suffered some kind of mental deterioration. In either event, he did not want to awaken his companions and receive any kind of confirmation that night. He crawled back into his bedroll, managed to get back to sleep.

When he awoke the next morning, he found no trace of the phantom campers, and he did not bother to relate his bizarre "dream" to his friends. Nevertheless, he was curious about the strange experience, and he decided to do a bit of research.

It was not until 1956 that he gave his eerie story to the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. His studies had disclosed the fact that in August, 1541, bands of *conquistadores* under the leadership of De Soto and Coronado had actually been in the Ozark area of the Current River. Could it have happened that exactly four hundred years later, Hall and his friends had camped on the very ground where a party of gold-lusting Spaniards and their Indian guides had built their own campfires? If such a thing can be so, we may at this time in our amassing of scientific knowledge only wonder what strange laws of physics or superphysics permitted Leonard Hall to perceive flames reflecting off tarnished armor four centuries after the initial stimulus response had been transmitted.

It is noteworthy that the Spaniards and their Indian guides took no notice of Leonard Hall and his friends. Different dimensions of time may overlap, but never, it appears, can their inhabitants interact.

Brigadoon offers us a lovely story in words and music about two lovers from different times becoming romantically, and eternally, involved, but such dramatic fraternization between dwellers of different time tracks must of necessity remain in the realm of musical fantasy. The old science-fiction plot of the time-traveler who accidentally murders his own grandfather, thereby eliminating himself in the future-present, offers us an excellent, if involved, example of just why denizens of various dimensions of time could never be permitted to physically confront one another. It would just get too darned complicated! For if a time-traveler murdered a young, single man who would be his grandfather one day, then the murderer could not have been born in the future and would thereby have been unable to return to the past.

In our physical plane, the past must always precede the future. It may be that time is really only an Eternal Now to the psychically gifted, to the prophets and seers. But as one lives his daily life on the material plane and in the physical dimension, time must pass in sequence. Judging by the experiences of people mentioned in this chapter, it appears that some men and women do experience a doubling back, or a reemergence, of scenes from the past, but at no time has an individual from one plane of time reality been able to establish any kind of contact with a person from the other.

And some restored scenes of another time have been exceedingly dramatic.

In England, the famous Battle of Edge Hill was refought by spectral soldiers on several consecutive weekends during the Christmas season of 1642, and King Charles II sent three of his most trusted officers to investigate. On two consecutive nights the king's emissaries watched the phantom battle and even recognized several of their comrades who had been killed during the fray.

On August 4, 1951, two young Englishwomen vacationing in Dieppe, France, were awakened before dawn by the sounds of shellfire, divebombing, and the scraping of landing craft hitting the beach. Nine years before, nearly a thousand young Canadians had been slaughtered in the ill-fated Dieppe raid. The record the Englishwomen kept of the times of the ebb and flow of the battle was identical to the minute with accounts of the raid kept in the British War Office.

Terrified woodcutters and soldiers on maneuvers have reported coming face to face with phantoms of fighting and dying men on the small island of Corregidor, where in the early days of World War II a handful of American and Filipino troops sought vainly to halt the Japanese advance against the Philippine Islands.

The May, 1967, issue of *Fate* magazine carried a reader's account of a much quieter, but equally amazing, inadvertent misstep on the time track.

J. P. J. Chapman of Poole, Dorset, England, told of the day in April, 1966, he and his wife had gone in search of some spring blossoms to decorate a charity event. Approximately half a mile away from the Chapman house is a broad avenue heavily lined with trees and rhododendrons. Years ago there was an exclusive residential district in this spot, but today there stand mainly apartment buildings in their stead. Three vacant lots of rather extensive acreage have been left largely untended and allowed to revert to natural growth. Mrs. Chapman suggested that they search there for any flowering shrubs she might use for the charity event.

While Mrs. Chapman went to examine a large flowering cherry tree, her husband stood looking at some primroses. When he looked up again, the apartment buildings were gone!

He could see his wife in the distance and everything seemed perfectly normal, but the apartment buildings simply were not there!

"Then something else happened," Chapman wrote. "Everything changed; a vast open nothingness surrounded me. But I had not lost my orientation because the sun was shining and gave me my bearings. But had I entered another dimension? And would I get out?"

Chapman deduced that the "exit" must be his point of entry, so he crossed two sticks on the ground to mark his position. Then he began to walk toward where the apartment buildings should have been. He walked on and on. There were no apartment buildings, no roads, no traffic, ". . . just a vast open space and no sign of any kind of life."

Lest his wife become worried about him, Chapman hastened back to where he had left the crossed sticks. He saw his wife near him and spoke to her.

"How you startled me!" she exclaimed. "Where have you been? I called you and searched for you and couldn't find you."

Now everything was back to normal, Chapman observed. The apartment buildings were where they should be. The shrubs, trees, and traffic were once again visible.

"But I found one odd thing. The ground where I had been standing was soft and bare. I could see my footprints going toward the flats—but they suddenly ended as

if I had stepped off the ground into thin air! And my return path started in the same manner as the outgoing marks suddenly had vanished!"

Chapman concludes his report by musing: "But the question remains: had I stepped into the past, the future, or another space dimension?"

Aye, there's the rub—and the Great Question!

VII

Flying Rocks and Falling Flesh

On August 27, 1968, motorists traveling between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo on the Via Dutra Highway were astonished to see a strange rainfall off the road in the distance. Yet it could not be rain, as there were no clouds, and the substance was much too dark to be ordinary water. When Deputy Marcondes Fereiro arrived on the scene, he found an area of one square kilometer literally strewn with meat and blood!

The São Paulo newspapers reported that the pieces of flesh were approximately two feet apart and varying in size from roughly two to seven inches. The meat was spongy in texture and violet in color. It was accompanied with drops of blood.

Police were at a loss for an explanation of the strange "sky fall." The sky had been clear on the day the grisly debris descended, and there were no aircraft reported in the area either prior to, during, or after the dropping, nor were any birds noted in the sky. With no reasonable clue

as to the source of the meat, the police ended the affair by discreetly removing the samples.

In September, 1966, a mysterious lump of "charred material" dropped onto the farm of Carl Retherford, near Windfall, Indiana. At first it was thought that the chunk was part of a huge meteor seen over the Midwest, but subsequently checking by chemist Michael E. Lipschutz of Purdue University convinced Retherford that the material was "definitely not from a meteor." Farmer Retherford also established that the chunk could not be furnace ashes, as he did not use coal. The conclusion? No one knows what it was or how it got there. Or if anyone knows, he is not giving out the information.

Perhaps Carl Retherford's "charred material" was a distant relative to the equally strange substance that fell to the ground October 8, 1967, in Putnam County, New York.

It was about 3:30 A.M. when Patrolman Gene Blaney, of the Brewster, New York, police force spied "this big glob of fire falling from the sky. As it hit the earth it exploded, and I saw balls of flame seven or eight feet tall shoot up in the air. White smoke came rolling out of it like clouds. I thought it would never stop."

Mysterious objects falling from the sky have been with us for an untold number of years. For a long time, however, no one could even venture an explanation of the phenomenon, causing this rather uncomfortable hole in the existing technology to be completely ignored. Rains of flesh, fish, frogs, and rocks were relegated to the back pages of the newspapers, and considered oddities—when they were considered at all.

Then, around the turn of the century, Charles Fort took it upon himself to bring these well-ignored facts out into the open. In 1919, *The Book of the Damned* was published, with the note that "By the damned I mean what science has excluded," and suddenly a rather large spotlight was thrown upon what scientists had hoped people would forget.

Science is now forced to recognize the existence of sky falls, but now, instead of changing its understanding to include this phenomenon, the phenomenon has been pushed and shoved to fit the existing structure. Hence some of the improbable "scientific" explanations you will read in this chapter.

Take the case of Fred H. Koch, a professional photographer whose speciality is lightning. On May 3, 1952, Koch was in the Bingham, New Mexico, area taking pictures of a storm. As the winds increased, dirt began to swirl across the ground and up into the sky. Koch sought refuge in his car, where he waited out the storm.

The afternoon had been hot and the earth was dry and parched. Suddenly, the heavens opened up and poured down rain for nearly two hours, quenching the thirst of everything in sight.

When the sun finally came out again, Koch left his car and walked out into the desert. Within minutes the sun was beating down as unmercifully as before and the sand had sucked up all the water. It looked as though there had been no rain, for the whole area, with the exception of the dry-bed arroyos, had dried up. Only the arroyos held small pools of water.

As Koch walked along he noticed something strange. The entire area he was approaching was dotted with hundreds of tiny dead fish. They were all about an inch long and they were very soft. The slightest pressure crushed them.

In the arroyos where small pools of water remained, some of the fish were alive and swimming. These, however, met with the same fate as their brothers on the sand. The sun hungrily drank up what water was left, and Koch was left surrounded by the smell of fish and feeling as though he were standing on a beach.

Koch took several pictures of the fish, some of which were published in the local newspaper. These photographs elicited the interest of a biology group from Lubbock, Texas, which traveled to the area and collected a great number of the fish. They reported that the fish had prominent eyes and were no kin to any of the several species of fish known to inhabit underground pools, rejecting the suggestion that the fish had come from a 150-foot well nearby. There were no other lakes, rivers, or ponds within an appreciable distance.

The whole affair began to attract official interest, as evidenced by the large array of entomologists, biologists, ornithologists, botanists, and archaeologists who arrived en masse. Theories and explanations were rife, but nothing seemed to really click. The most logical one, working within the framework of the facts available, was that the sun had drawn up both the fish and the water from a large body of water as far north as Colorado. Then, as the storm moved south, a low-pressure point developed over the hot, arid desert, causing the clouds to empty their load of fish and water onto a rain belt about two miles wide.

This theory sounds good enough, but Fred Koch did some further investigating and discovered that the rain belt had been approximately two miles wide where he had been, but further south it became much wider. And the fish had only fallen within the area of one square mile.

How do fish suddenly appear in the middle of a desert?

How do fish suddenly rain down on Pentagon Parkway in Dallas, Texas? Two little girls, Martha Brumley and Barbara Williams, collected about forty in a jar, all about three inches long. The fish, which fell June 18, 1958, were dark gray with reddish-gold spots and red tails. The same pond theory proffered Koch was released by the weather bureau. The Dallas *News* called the theory unbelievable. They preferred to call it a "miracle."

What caused five-inch-long salamanders to fall in Portal, North Dakota, in October, 1949? Local inhabitants, never having seen salamanders before, did not even know what they were!

Did the same stork that brought Portal its salamanders deposit a crawfish six feet up in a peach tree in Eberton, Georgia? Or drop a goldfish down Mrs. Walker's chimney in Whitechurch, Bristol, England? Or fling a live minnow, three inches long, onto the windshield of Frank Luckel's car in San Diego, California?

How many seagulls or other birds, strong winds, and rainfalls can be used to explain away such phenomena before someone finds the explanation a bit too pat, a bit too blithely unaware of too many puzzling facts?

By far the most common of these baffling visitors from the skies are the large chunks of icefalls. The most uncanny aspect of the icefall is its almost deliberate aim.

On March 11, 1966, a block of ice weighing between twenty-five and thirty pounds sailed through the air at an angle and settled to a resounding halt atop a parked car. Passersby immediately gathered around the unfortunate car, and its owners rushed out of the nearby restaurant where they were lunching. Frank Haynes looked at the dent on the roof of his car and wondered if there was an insurance company in the world that covered strange blocks of ice homing in for a landing.

The shattered ice fragments were tested by Dr. Cecil Marburger for radioactivity, but the results were negative. Witnesses claimed the ice was frosty, but did not resemble commercial ice.

On March 25, 1966, Mrs. Lorraine Nuckels of San Mateo, California, sat watching television with her family. All at once they heard something that sounded like the detonation of a bomb. The children screamed and clung to their mother, who dared not show that she shared their fright. Rushing them to the kitchen, she ran next door and called the police. When the local officers arrived they found that a huge chunk of ice, measuring about one square foot, had hurtled through the roof of Mrs. Nuckels' home. The ice chunk had missed the Nuckelses by a scant fifteen feet. Moreover, ice chips the size of a baseball circled the house in a 150-foot perimeter.

These mysterious icefalls are most commonly believed to come from passing aircraft. But in the cases so far related there were no airplanes seen or heard over the area either before or at the time the ice crashed. Invariably, the aviation industry has assured the populace that there were no icing conditions at the pertinent times.

But if the icefalls do not come from planes passing overhead, where do they come from? Do they come from outer space? Or could they perhaps come from flying saucers? Science will not commit itself further than the airplane theory. Yet there are a lot of people who feel they have the right to know the complete answer.

Perhaps you would want to know more, too, if you were Ronald Phipps and a chunk of ice "weighing several pounds" put a hole in your roof.

Or if you were a passerby on Arch Street, Brownsville, Pennsylvania, when a hunk of ice weighing about twenty-five pounds crashed to the sidewalk.

Of if you were Dominick Bacigalupo, of Madison Township, New Jersey, and a *seventy-pound* cake of ice exploded through your roof, totally demolishing two kitchen chairs. It is interesting to note along with this case that when the airlines were blamed for the crash the area airports declared that "airliners do not carry ice."

Clearly, a better explanation must be found. Something in our skies is playing havoc with our ecology. If there is a physical reason for such phenomena, its discovery would certainly aid our present understanding of physics. If there is another reason—such as the flying-saucer theory—we had better assume that our space brothers are not simply attempting to amuse us with their antics.

Consider this mystery. On January 25, 1969, something interfered with the flight of a flock of ducks, causing an unpleasant rain of dead and dying fowl to fall upon the community of St. Mary's City, Maryland. Widespread hemorrhages and multiple rib fractures were found on the hapless birds, and they were collected from virtually every part of the community. Ducks were found on the local campus, around the city, in the St. Mary's River, and even in the downtown business district.

Townfolk assumed that the destruction of hundreds of canvasbacks, redheads, and scaups were caused by either an explosion or some kind of aerial collision. The only problem was that no loud noises were heard in the vicinity when the pelting began, and V.D. Stotts of the Maryland Department of Games and Inland Fish stated that it was rare for a duck to collide with objects in flight. A collision with an airplane would have been reported by its pilot and would more than likely have caused the aircraft to crash.

The evidence? Hundreds of smashed ducks in an area where no fierce storms were reported, no airplanes were damaged, no UFO's were sighted, and no further explanations were offered by the experts.

The conclusion? A complete and total mystery.

An equally inexplicable, but far more pleasant, surprise awaited Stanley Morris of Louisville, Kentucky, when he ran outside to investigate "a noise that sounded like an explosion."

On the night of May 16, 1965, Morris was sitting in his home when he heard a noise so loud that he jumped from his chair. Full of concern, Morris stepped outside to find his backyard and the roof of his garage covered with bags of cookies. A quick check revealed that his neighbors to either side had also been blessed with the goodies. There was no identifying mark on any of the bags.

Morris concluded that the cookies had fallen from a cargo-carrying aircraft, but none of the local bakeries had made such a shipment.

Sometimes the mysterious "fallout" from the sky resembles a substance more than an object. There are many reports of sticky or dusty substances being spread out over a large area. One such statement came from the French consul at Pernambuco, Brazil, M. Laine, on November 1, 1820, when he recorded in the *Annales de Physique et Chimie* that in the early part of October the city had been showered with a substance resembling silk. The substance covered an area stretching ninety miles inland, and almost as many miles out to sea. An entire French vessel found itself covered with the silky material. Many people, according to Laine's report, had preserved specimens of the strange substance.

On October 11, 1958, a somewhat similar substance fell "all around" Portales, New Mexico. Reporting it variously as "gossamer" strands up to fifty feet long, "spider webs," and "fine dust held together by static electricity," the inhabitants dismissed it as a nuisance.

In 1958, Chicago's South Side reported "black dew" discoloring buildings in a ten-block area. The soot has arrived regularly for the past several years and has been accompanied by a bitter-tasting sulfur-like acid gas.

As smog becomes an increasingly international problem, it is likely that some of these events will be laid, choking and kicking, at its polluted doors. Still others can be explained by duststorms. But the vapor reported released by thousands of white objects that fell on Mexico City on July 30, 1963, could be linked to the "sulfur-like, bitter-tasting acid gas" that accompanied the black soot of Chicago. Mexico City's white objects left no residue, however, being described by witnesses as about a meter in length and disappearing like giant soap bubbles as soon as they hit the ground. The local observatory could offer no explanation for the phenomena.

Switchboards at government offices in England were jammed by complaints on the morning of July 1, 1968. As the calls slowly filtered through, officials were able to put together the facts of a rather astounding rainfall. It seemed that sometime during the night of June 30 to July 1, approximately one and a half tons of dust and sand per square mile had been dumped over south and central England. Awakening in the morning, angry and confused Britons stepped outside to discover that their houses, lawns, and cars were spattered with a layer of red, yellow, or brown dust.

Of course they demanded an explanation. The general consensus of the meteorologists was that the dust had come from the Sahara Desert! The theory was that some freak storm had picked up the sand and brought it over to England.

A similar "dustfall" had blessed the hardy isle in 1903, and had dutifully been noted by Charles Fort. This second deposition naturally elicited a comment from the International Fortean Organization. Ronald J. Willis took the Sahara theorists to task in Volume 1, Number 4 of *Info,* the Fortean journal:

"No one really bothered," wrote Willis, "to find the fantastic storm that had picked up several million tons of the Sahara and toted it over populated North Africa, maybe France and Spain, and dropped its load in jolly old England. There are no reports of any such red rain in any other European country at the time."

Aside from the more common falls of fish, ice, and dust, there have been a number of one-shot oddities that come whistling merrily out of the sky, leaving people the proud owners of scraps of *something,* and utterly mystified.

Bits of fine wire seven inches long visited a thirty-foot area on Kleber Road, Glenshaw, a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The wire was "covered with a greasy substance" and in some places burrowed an inch into the ground, tearing up lawns and shrubs.

An aluminum ball, twelve and a half inches in diameter, plopped into the garden of Mrs. Elsie Negus, in Surrey, England. The ball was hollow and empty, and attached to a parachute and a burst rubber balloon. There was no identification on the object.

To round out the account of strange things that have fallen from our skies, let us go to the old master collector of stories such as these, Charles Fort himself. In *The Book of the Damned,* he reported the following:

On August 20, 1870, large crystals of salt fell in Switzerland. The explanation? That the salt "came over the Mediterranean from some part of Africa."

On March 9, 1888, a block of limestone fell near Middleburg, Florida. The expert investigating this one denied that the object had fallen from the sky. His reasoning? "There is no limestone in the sky; therefore this limestone did not fall from the sky."

In the winter of 1876, in Christiania, Norway, worms were found crawling upon the ground. It would have been impossible for the worms to come out of the frozen ground, said Fort. Where else could they have come from, he asked, except from the sky?

In May, 1858, large amounts of beetle larvae fell near Mortagne, France.

On July 3, 1886, hordes of land snails fell near Redruth, Cornwall, England, during a heavy thunderstorm. The snails were so numerous that hatfuls could be gathered up. They were reported as "quite different to any previously known in the district." Snails also fell at Bristol, "in such quantities that they were shoveled up." As usual, there were those who insisted the snails had been on the ground all along, but even these had to admit that the sun had had a "curious azure-blue appearance at the time."

On August 9, 1892, a yellow cloud appeared over Paderborn, Germany. Intermixed with the rain from this cloud were hundreds of mussels.

On July 3, 1860, the sidewalks of Montreal, Canada, were covered with lizards that had dropped from the sky.

"Thunderstones" were reported as falling frequently in North Africa. A "thunderstone" weighing eight pounds dropped on London in April, 1876, and a "thunderstone" fell on Cardiff, Wales, on September 26, 1916. A "stone that fell in a storm" landed near St. Albans, England. "Thunderstones" were reported in Burma, "unlike any other found in Burma." All these reports were met with the usual logical explanation. There are no stones in the sky; therefore these stones did not fall from the sky.

On May 27, 1884, a meteorite was reported from Tysnas, Norway. The turf was torn up at the spot where it allegedly had fallen, but two days later a stone quite unlike a meteorite was found nearby. It was described as "in shape and size very like the fourth part of a large Stilton cheese."

In November, 1885, an "obviously artificial stone fell from the sky onto Naples, Italy. Two scientists who examined it concluded that it was a "shoe-maker's lapstone."

On December 1, 1888, J. A. Livingstone displayed a hunk of quartz he claimed had come from the sky. It had been split open and was found to be hollow. No one believed his claim that it fell from above, because the rock was not of "true meteorite material." In other words, since it was not a meteorite, it could not have fallen from the sky. Only meteorites fall from the sky.

Fish, ice, dust, strange sticky substances, red rains, and bags of cookies. These things do not exist in the sky, and therefore they cannot come from the sky. Any rocks or charred remains that have fallen must be parts of meteorites.

"From this kind of nonsense it is plain that our thinking has come full circle in the past 150 years," wrote Curtis Fuller. "Early in the nineteenth century science knew the meteorites could not exist 'because there are no stones in the sky.' Today the assumption is '*only* stones are in the sky.' "

VIII

The Terror of Spontaneous Human Combustion

On March 26, 1965, a friend who had come to visit seventy-year-old Herbert Shinn of Camp Chaffee Road, Foster Park, California, found him in his kitchen with severe burns on his chest, back, and spine. He died thirty minutes later in a hospital.

Shinn had been alone when the friend had discovered his condition, and investigators found absolutely no evidence of fire anywhere in his house or in his yard. Nothing in his house had been burned, but Shinn died from the severity of flames that had reached him from some invisible source.

In December, 1956, Mrs. Virginia Caget, 1130 Maunakea Street, Honolulu, Hawaii, walked into the room of Young Sik Kim, a seventy-eight-year-old cripple, to find him enveloped in blue flames. By the time firemen arrived on the scene, Kim and his easy chair were ashes. Strangely enough, nearby curtains and clothing were untouched by fire, in spite of the fierce heat that would have been necessary to consume a human being.

In December, 1965, Mrs. Katherine Elizabeth Chaires was discovered on fire in the living room of her apartment at 210 Liberty Street, Oneida, New York. Edward Wilcoxon, who lived in the same building, burned his hand trying to remove Mrs. Chaires from the flames.

On August 19, 1966, Doris Lee Jacobs of Oceano, California, burned to death in her trailer home at 1342 23rd Street. Although Miss Jacobs suffered burns on over 95 percent of her flesh, the inside of the trailer was only partially scorched. Officials could offer no explanation for the fire, because it was the woman, not the trailer, who had burst into flames.

What terrible forces bring about the deadly blue tongues of fire that consume human beings? How can human flesh be heir to such dangers as spontaneous combustion? Spontaneous combustion, we learn early in life, is confined to oily rags and newspapers piled up in poorly ventilated corners of basements and garages. It is horrible to consider that human beings might suffer the same fiery fate as stacks of oily rags in a corner.

On September 20, 1938, at Chelmsford, England, a woman burst into blue flames in the midst of a crowded dance floor. No one was able to extinguish the blaze that seemed to be fed by her own flesh, and in minutes she was but a heap of ashes.

"In all my experience," Coroner Leslie Beccles said after conducting a thorough investigation, "I have never come across any case as mysterious as this one."

There seems little question that women are most often the victims of spontaneous human combustion (SHC) or preternatural combustibility (PC).

On July 30, 1937, a woman who had been paddling about in a small boat with her husband and children at England's Norfolk Broads was engulfed by terrible blue flames and was nothing but a mound of ugly ash in a matter of a few horrifying moments. Neither any member of her family nor the wooden boat was harmed.

Charles Fort considered SHC and remarked: "I think that our data relate not to 'spontaneous combustion of human bodies,' but to things, or beings, that, with a flaming process, consume men and women, but, like werewolves, or alleged werewolves, mostly pick out women."

The following incidents were reported in Fort's *Lo!*

Barbara Bell, aged seventy-seven, was found on a sofa with her body burned as if it had been a long time in the midst of intense flames.

Mrs. Thomas Cochrane of Rosehall, Falkirk, England, was discovered burned almost beyond recognition, but her charred body was surrounded by pillows and cushions that showed not the slightest sign of fire.

Elizabeth Clark was found covered with burns in an unscorched bed.

Dr. B. H. Hartwell of Ayer, Massachusetts, was called to observe the crouched form of a woman being consumed by flames coming from her own flesh.

Dr. D. J. Gee, a lecturer in forensic medicine at the University of Leeds, England, wrote of a case of SHC for the journal *Medicine, Science and the Law* (5:37–8, January, 1965). According to Dr. Gee, the victim was a slim, eighty-five-year-old woman who lived with her son and daughter-in-law in a ground-floor apartment. Her family had left the apartment by 9:30 A.M. on the day she died. Neighbors had discovered smoke issuing from a kitchen window and found the smoldering remains of a human body on the hearth.

When Dr. Gee visited the apartment two hours later, he noticed that the room was exceedingly warm and the ceiling felt hot. The paintwork was blistered and the walls and furnishings begrimed by soot. Only a part of the wooden edge of the hearth was burned, and a small section, approximately one foot in diameter, of the floor was damaged. The rug had not been burned, but it was greasy with tiny fragments of fat. A tea towel lying near where the body had been found was barely singed, and a large pile of dry firewood remained unaffected.

Dr. Gee concluded from his examination that the woman must have suffered a heart attack and fallen into the fire. "The appearances suggested that the body was ignited at the head by the fire, of which a few cinders remained, and had been sufficiently inflammable to burn to this degree without any other source of heat, like a candle; the draught from the chimney prevented spread of flames to other parts of the room."

In a 1961 study Dr. Gavin Thurston studied the literature of SHC and came to a number of conclusions, among them:

1. That under certain conditions a body will burn in its own fat with little or no damage to surrounding objects.
2. The combustion is not spontaneous, but started by an external source of heat.
3. This has occurred where the body has been in the path of a draft up a chimney from a lighted fire. Oxygenation is good and the pull of the flue prevents outward spread of the fire.

In order to test Dr. Thurston's theories, Dr. Gee conducted some experiments. He learned that human body fat, when melted in a crucible, will only burn at a temperature somewhere near 250° Centigrade. However, a cloth wick prepared in liquid fat will burn even when the temperature of the fat has dropped as low as 24° Centigrade.

Dr. Gee also enveloped a layer of human fat in several layers of thin cloth in order to produce a roll about eight inches long. Combustion of the roll proceeded slowly along its length, burning with a smoky yellow flame and producing a great deal of soot. In both of these experiments, a fan was arranged so that combustion would proceed in a direction opposite the flow of air.

Dr. Gee admits that these experiments are by no means conclusive, but argues that they support the theory put forward by Dr. Thurston, ". . . which seems the most reasonable explanation for the occurrence of these curious phenomena."

But reasonable explanations do not always fit the circumstances and the facts of a situation.

Joan Hart found her invalid sister Mary sitting in a parlor rocking chair literally swathed in flames. Joan snatched up a throw rug and wrapped it around Mary in order to smother the flames.

Somehow Joan managed to carry her sister upstairs where she lay the badly burned woman on a bed with clean sheets. But while Joan went to fetch help, Mary "caught" fire again. When Joan arrived with a doctor, Mary had been reduced to ashes, with the exception of her head and some fingers.

Amazingly, the bedclothes were not damaged in any way. There was only that strange coating of greasy soot that is reported in so many of these cases.

On April 7, 1969, Mrs. Grace Walker, sixty, of 5334 Cedar Avenue, Long Beach, California, was found on the floor of her living room with burns covering 90 percent of her body. Although she was still alive when discovered, she was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

Investigating police officers said that the only signs of fire in the house were the ashes left from Mrs. Walker's clothes, which had been burned from her body by the flames from her flesh. There were no burners lighted on the stove and not a single match was to be found in Mrs. Walker's house. Friends and relatives said that the woman did not smoke and never carried matches on her person.

In 1960, Mrs. Louise Matthews of South Philadelphia survived an eerie experience that might offer an explanation for at least some of the mysterious cremations that

have taken place throughout the world and throughout all recorded time.

Mrs. Matthews claims that she was lying on her living room sofa when she glanced up to see a large red ball of fire come through both the closed window and the Venetian blinds without harming either. At first Mrs. Matthews thought that an atomic bomb had fallen, and she buried her face in the sofa.

But the ball of fire passed through the living room, into the dining room, and drifted out through a closed dining room window. Mrs. Matthews said that it made a sizzling noise as it floated through her house.

She telephoned her husband at work, told him the strange tale, and asked him to come home at once. Mr. Matthews may have thought that his wife was overwrought about something and had had some vivid dream or had imagined the whole episode, but when he walked through the front door, he began to cry. Mrs. Matthews exhibited visible proof of her experience: When Matthews had left for work that day, his wife had had a full head of hair—now she was half bald!

According to Mrs. Matthews, she had felt a tingling sensation in the back of her head as the ball of fire passed over her. When she felt the spot with her hand, her hair had fallen out, leaving her scalp as smooth and clean as her face.

Even though her hair is a woman's crowning glory, Mrs. Rose Howes, seventy-four, of New Braintree Road, Barre, Massachusetts, would have been most willing to sacrifice her hair in order to have escaped the horrible fiery fingers that engulfed her on July 16, 1960. Alerted by her screams, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Drake, who lived upstairs in her home, ran down to find Mrs. Howes's clothing aflame from her waist up. Investigators could not find any reason why Mrs. Howes suddenly became a living torch.

A letter from surgeon Stephen Power of the Royal Homeopathic Hospital, London, to the *Journal* of the British Medical Association told of a real-life "flamethrower." According to Dr. Power, every time a certain British minister bent to blow out altar candles, his breath caught fire. Although it might be momentarily advantageous to breathe a bit of fire and brimstone into one's sermons, it was certainly an awkward condition to be blighted with on an extended basis.

Dr. Power informed his colleagues that the cause was found to be the buildup of an inflammable gas in the patient's stomach caused by a duodenal ulcer. After an operation, the surgeon wrote, "the parson was able to carry out his duties in a more decorous fashion."

Now, I am not suggesting that all the unfortunate victims in this chapter have been tragically ignited by a buildup of inflammable gas in their own stomachs, but there are records of individuals who have seemed to contain their own individual, self-contained flamethrowers.

The *Glasgow News,* Glasgow, Scotland, for May 20, 1878, reported a series of bizarre fires in farmers' haystacks that always seemed to occur when a certain twelve-year-old girl passed by. She was never seen to go near the haystacks, but she may not have needed to touch them. The human mind may be capable of focusing enough raw energy upon both material and flesh to cause them to burst into flames.

It was reported in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in December, 1891, that a fourteen-year-old girl named Jennie Bramwell was seen to go into trance and, by pointing at ceilings or walls, cause them to crackle and blaze with fire.

Investigators in Budapest, Hungary, told of a thirteen-year-old boy who slept with strange blue flames dancing around his bed.

Then, in 1929, there was the teen-aged Negro girl in the West Indies who simply could not be kept in clothing.

Whenever she put a new dress on, it began to smolder and burn. She always received the oldest bedsheets, because one never knew when her bedclothes might catch fire upon contact with her flesh. The girl herself never had burns on any part of her body.

During a visit to Memphis, Tennessee, in 1927, Vice-President Dawes encountered a Negro repairman who demonstrated his uncanny ability to ignite a handkerchief simply by breathing on it.

Recently, a number of newsclips have crossed my desk concerning a certain Brian Clements of Harrow, England, who is able to build up a tremendous electrical charge in his body. He becomes so "hot" during the day that he must touch a grounded metal pole the moment he returns home so that he can kiss his wife and children without endangering them. If he were to hug them before he had expelled the pentup electrical energy in his body, he might deliver enormous electrical jolts to their bodies.

In Cardiff, Wales, Brian Williams is said to be able to cause neon tubes to glow brilliantly by grasping the terminals in his hands.

A former professor at the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn has set up a consulting firm designed to locate "hot" employees (those who may endanger certain industries by their ability to absorb and discharge large jolts of static electricity) for industrialists. Professor Robin Beach states that his studies have led him to estimate that approximately one in 100,000 individuals have this capability.

Again, though, it seems quite unlikely that any of the aforementioned bizarre instances of spontaneous human combustion could have been caused by a gigantic spark of static electricity generated, or stored up, by the victim's body. Even such a massive jolt of electricity as that contained in a lightning bolt could hardly cremate a human body as those victims of SHC were consumed. In some of these cases, there has been nothing left of the unfortunate individual but a heap of ashes.

Just what kind of heat must be generated to reduce a human body to such a state in a matter of minutes, or, at most, a few hours? In an article on spontaneous human combustion in *True* magazine, Allan W. Eckert discussed the experiments of Dr. Wilton Krogman, professor of physical anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, regarding the effects of fire on flesh and bone.

Dr. Krogman tested bones still encased in human flesh, bones devoid of flesh but not yet allowed to dry out, and bones that have dried. He burned cadavers in a wide variety of fires fed by such combustibles as hickory and oak, gasoline, oil, coal, and acetylene.

In answer to Eckert's question, how hot a fire must be to totally destroy a human body, Dr. Krogman replied: "First and foremost, it takes a terrific heat to completely consume a human body, both flesh and skeleton. I've watched a body in a crematorium burn at 2,000°F. for over eight hours, burning under the best possible conditions of both heat and combustion, with everything controlled. Yet at the end of that time there was scarcely a bone that was not still present and completely recognizable as a human bone. It was calcined [reduced to its original matrix], but it was *not* ash or powder. Only at over 3,000° F. have I seen a bone fuse so that it ran and became volatile. These . . . are very great heats that would affect anything flamable within a considerable radius of the blaze."

How, then, can a human being burn beyond recognition, in a number of cases in less than an hour, yet not cause the fire to spread beyond the chair in which he was sitting or the small area of the floor on which he might have sprawled? According to Dr. Krogman, the temperatures required to bring about such immolation should ignite and consume anything capable of burning "within a considerable radius of the blaze."

In what has become a classic case of SHC, Mrs. Mary H. Reeser of St. Petersburg, Florida, was last seen relaxing comfortably in an armchair in her apartment at 9:00 P.M. on a Sunday evening. When a telegram was delivered to her eleven hours later, nothing remained of the 170-pound woman but a shrunken skull, one vertebra, and a left foot wearing the charred remains of a black slipper.

Mary Fuller, editor of *Fate* magazine, did a rundown on the case derived from clippings and research supplied by readers in the St. Petersburg area. Among the bizarre factors involved in the July 2, 1951, case, Mrs. Fuller noted:

> The windows of Mrs. Reeser's apartment were open all night. Yet no one smelled or saw any smoke.
>
> The apartment itself, though unbearably hot, was almost completly unscathed. The rooms were coated with oily soot above a four foot line only. The armchair, lamp, chairside table, and small portion of the carpet directly beneath the armchair were destroyed. Nothing else was damaged.
>
> . . . It is known to require a temperature of 3,000° to so completely consume a human body.
>
> Mrs. Reeser's skull was shrunk to the size of a baseball, yet in all other known cases of intense heat the skull expands—sometimes even exploding!

Fire Chief Nesbit said that he had never seen anything like it in all his years of investigating fires.

Edward S. Davies, arson agent for the National Board of Underwriters of Tampa, Florida, stated: "We do not know that it was a fire—we just don't know what could have caused it."

A spokesman for a St. Petersburg mattress company pointed out that there is not enough material in any overstuffed chair to cremate a human body. Cotton, he said, comprises the basic stuffing of such a chair, and this material is often combined with felt and hair or foam-rubber cushions. None of these materials is capable of bursting suddenly into violent flames, although they do possess properties that enable them to smolder for long periods of time.

Dr. Krogman remarked that he could not conceive of such a complete cremation without more objects having caught fire and burned in the apartment. "It has been established that a heat of 3,000° Fahrenheit is necessary to completely consume the bones as happened in the Reeser case," Dr. Krogman emphasized. "Unless the woman was burned elsewhere and the remains place in the apartment, I am baffled and amazed."

At first Dr. Krogman had theorized that a "super lightning bolt" might have struck Mrs. Reeser, her body serving as a conductor to ground the current through a wall-type heater behind the chair. He discarded this theory as soon as he learned that local weather bureau records showed no lightning in St. Petersburg on the night Mrs. Reeser met her horrible and bizarre death.

"Never have I seen a skull so shrunken or a body so completely consumed by heat," Dr. Krogman remarked. "This is contrary to normal experience and I regard it as the most amazing thing I've ever seen. As I review it, the short hairs on my neck bristle with vague fear. Were I living in the Middle Ages, I'd mutter something like 'black magic'!"

Police Chief J. R. Reichart received an FBI report stating: "There is no evidence that any kind of inflammable fluids, volatile liquids, chemicals, or other accelerants had been used to set the widow's body ablaze."

Spontaneous human combustion seems to strike without warning and without leaving a clue. It seems to occur primarily among the elderly and among women, but there is no standard rule for these grim cases of preternatural combustibility. Nearly every theory, such as that those who imbibe heavily might be more susceptible to the

burning death, has been disproved and rejected. At this point, no investigator really seems to know exactly what set of circumstances might bring body cells to the critical stage at which they might spontaneously burst into the flames that feed on the body's own fatty tissue. We must face the grisly fact that spontaneous human combustion might occur to anyone—even us.

IX

Spooklights and Fire Devils

On the night of January 4, 1967, the J. W. Curlee family of Indio, California, was fast asleep on the top floor of the old two-story Southern Pacific Railroad building. The family had no advance warning that the old depot was to catch fire that night and burn to the ground.

Mr. Curlee was able to rouse his family and herd them all outside unhurt, and he, too, would have been unscathed had he not reentered the flaming building to make sure that there were no other men inside. Curlee suffered burns over two-thirds of his body for his efforts, but in due time he was able to return to his job.

When the ashes had cooled and Curlee was back at his desk, there were three puzzling mysteries connected with the blaze that none of the Curlees could explain.

First, when they opened the family safe, they discovered blackened, melted, and fused coins. But somehow the birth certificates of daughters Cheryl and Sharon,

eighteen-year-old twins, had escaped the heat and the flames. Both certificates were intact.

Second, the day after the fire a picture of the baby, David, was returned to the Curlees. Though the frame and the glass were gone, the photograph was not even scorched.

And third, the most inexplicable of all, when Curlee returned to work he found the shoes that he had set at his bedside on the night of the fire neatly waiting for him alongside his desk. The leather showed no sign of flames, and Curlee was at a loss to explain how they got there.

The story of the Curlee fire shows one of the strange twists that fires may take There are recorded instances of fires that mysteriously avoid certain articles while all else is reduced to ashes; fires that break out in one corner of the room and seem to choose only certain items for destruction; flames that arise due to mysterious fireballs; and, stranger still, fireballs that leap and bounce about rooms without causing any damge.

It might be interesting to speculate on the motivation behind the fire that broke out in the Dresden, East Germany, public library in December, 1968. The fire was restricted to fourteen shelves, which were totally demolished. Only inches away, volumes under a different classification remained untouched. Which books were consumed? The library's complete collection of books on witchcraft and the black arts! Was some repentant witch trying to discourage future followers of her trade?

Another inexplicable fire occurred in the Charles H. Williamson home in Bladenboro, North Carolina, on a January morning in 1932, when Mrs. Williamson's dress suddenly burst into flames. Her husband and teen-aged daughter tore the burning frock from her body, and when all had recovered from their fear, they were astounded to see that Mrs. Williamson's body was unharmed. Father and daughter than gazed at their own hands in stupefaction. No burns, no blisters, not even the slightest red singe was apparent.

Fires that occur within a building or a home are commonly blamed on electrical difficulties, flammable cleaning fluids, stoves, ovens, and escaping gas. Peculiar fires that leap about outdoors are usually blamed on electrical or heat lightning, other natural phenomena, or—in cases where a fire is seen but no evidence of the blaze is found—to overworked imaginations.

But the people of Tuscson, Arizona, found just enough evidence to prove that they had witnessed a fire of some sort, and not enough to be convinced that they had viewed an ordinary fire.

On the night of February 8, 1955, a huge fire in the Santa Catalina Mountains was observed from the streets of downtown Tucson. As people gathered to watch, men in the crowd estimated the flames were climbing skyward to a height of fifty feet. The blaze continued for nearly eight hours.

The next day a search party composed of deputies, air rescue teams, and newsmen moved into the mountains, in search of the site of the disaster. At length they located the area, some 3,700 feet up. They knew they had the right spot, but there were almost no indications of a blaze, and certainly none that could be the result of the size of the fire they had watched the night before. The only clue was the large rocks scorched black that jutted out of the landscape. There were no patches of ashes anywhere, and there were no corroborating charred remains left from the burning object.

Something had definitely burned in the Santa Catalina Mountains, though, for the cactus all around had been crystallized and the ground in the vicinity, which was mostly covered with rock, was found to be scorched three to four inches deep. So something extremely flammable had burned on the mountain, but what it was, no one knows.

Another fire phenomenon that continues to confound the experts is ball lightning. Several interesting conclusions have been reached, but as yet no convincing solutions.

Dr. Leonard Reiffel, a syndicated science writer, made an appeal to his readers in 1967 for personal experiences with ball lightning. From their response, reported in *Fate* magazine, May, 1968, Reiffel confirmed that the size of ball lightning "seems to range from that of a golf ball up to three or four feet across, the most common being described as the size of a basketball or grapefruit."

He also confirmed that a number of people have seen a fireball come through a closed window. At first the ball is seen hovering outside the window, then, within seconds, the sphere manages to materialize on the other side of the glass. Dr. Reiffel suggested that this ability may be electrical phenomenon if the ball passes through a screen, "metal being a good electrical conductor."

"Blue balls of fire" began harassing residents of Joliet, Illinois, during a "peculiar" thunderstorm on March 21, 1916. The fireballs remained after the storm and during an unspecified period of time broke twenty windows in a residential district of the town.

A former professor at Northwestern University declared that the blue balls were bolides, resulting from two kinds of electricity coming together. A government meteorologist in Chicago flatly disagreed with him when he said he did not quite see how a bolide could break a window. Others less endowed with scientific minds let it go at: "It's an act of God."

Some of the broken windows turned a "peculiar, burned color," though no research seems to have been done on this aspect that provided any clues for such a manifestation.

Not too many years ago lightning balls were classified with UFOs, owing to the similarity of their movements. Now ball lightning has become worthy of scientific investigation on its own, while UFO research remains on the extreme outer fringes of respectability.

As soon as lightning balls became respectable they were exploited as the explanation for all strange light phenomena. Science had found a scapegoat in something it had previously preferred to ignore.

Lightning balls were indicted for terrorizing Mary Jiminez and her mother late in the summer of 1923. Mary had suffered a bout with chicken pox, so she and her mother were sleeping in the downstairs guestroom to eliminate the need for running up and down the stairs. The rest of the family slept upstairs on the other side of the house.

Mary was sleeping peacefully, the worst of the disease having spent itself, when suddenly she was awakened by a bright finger of light probing into the room. It swished across the open window and was joined by another beam of the same light. Together these two beams "swished in a scissors movement" as they swept across the yard and along the side of the house.

Mary's mother awakened, too, and both mother and daughter watched, paralyzed with fear, as the two lights walked sentry duty over their house.

"Never had we seen anything as bright or as eerie," wrote Mary for the March, 1968, issue of *Search* magazine. "The light fell from some point directly above the house and kept up its relentless switching back and forth as though searching for something."

What struck both women as odd was the fact that the lights illumined nothing but what was in their path. The area outside the shafts of light was in total darkness, and this is what frightened them most of all. It suggested some intelligence behind the eerie lights.

Then, just as suddenly as they had been turned on, the lights abruptly snapped off in midbeam. Shouting their alarm, Mary and her mother made for the stairs in record time, calling loudly for Mary's father and the rest of the family. The men were able to do little more than calm the unwilling spectators of the lights; they could unearth nothing to solve the mystery.

The source of the beams could not have been a dirigible, because they had heard no sounds of a motor, and aircraft of that day could not have hovered over the house for so long.

It could not have been a balloon, for the shafts of light were strong and unwavering. A balloon would have been susceptible to wind currents.

It could not have been the beacon lights of the new airport at Toledo, because the lights came straight down from above. "No land-based tower or beacon made those lights," declared Mary.

What were the strange shafts of light? Where did they come from? And . . . were they manned?

In the little town of Llano, New Mexico, residents made a connection between the strange bouncing lights seen along the river and the flying rocks that harassed the Quintanas family.

Both phenomena put in an appearance about the middle of July, 1966. Attacked by a shower of rocks, the Quintanas family sought help from their neighbors and policemen were called in. The pelting was thought to be a teen-age prank, but then the lights were noticed.

The lights were described as being the size of golf balls, and "bluish or grayish" in color. They resembled the beam of a flashlight, except that they bounced along the river much higher than a man's head and disappeared into the trees.

Barbed-wire fences separate small fields in this area, even crossing the river. It did not take long for the Quintanas to realize that if the lights were caused by teenagers, the pranksters would have to run along the riverbank and cross the fences. But there was no pause in the movement of the lights.

Were the hostile rocks connected in any way with the strange bouncing lights? Regardless of a connection, who or what was behind both phenomena?

Some of the spookiest lights on record are the ones linked popularly to ghosts and their haunting grounds. In the little town of Silver Cliff, in the Wet Mountain Valley of Colorado, ghost lights have plagued the local cemetery since 1880. Silver Cliff is itself almost a ghost town: In 1880 it boasted a population of 5,087; today it has only 217 inhabitants.

The ghost lights reached the mass media in the spring of 1956 in the *Wet Mountain Tribune,* and on August 20, 1967, in *The New York Times.* Local folklore has it that the lights were first seen in 1880 by a merry group of miners passing by the cemetery. When they saw the flickering blue lights over the gravestones, their laughter died out and they left in a hurry.

Since then, the lights have been observed by generations of tourists and residents of Custer County. They have noted that the curious blue lights cannot be seen as clearly on the sandstone markers. This convinced several spectators that the lights were only a reflection of houselights in the valley.

Not so, insisted County Judge August Menzel. In *The New York Times* he recounted the night that everyone in Silver Cliff and nearby Westcliff shut off their lights. Even the street lights were turned off, "but the graveyard lights still danced."

If the ghostly gravemarkers cannot be attributed to the reflection of ordinary house and municipal lights, just what can they be? Oldtimers and younger theorists have come up with many suggestions:

They are believed to be reflections from the stars. Yet the lights are just as clear on a starless, moonless night. They are believed to be caused by phosphorescing ore and glowing wood, but the darker the night the brighter the lights. It was suggested that radioactive ores were causing the flickering lights. But geiger counters were

then employed to cover the entire area, and no radioactivity was discovered. So the eternal scapegoat of a teenagers' pranks was adopted. But when the graves were checked for luminescence, none was found. Scraping the bottom of the barrel, it was suggested that the graves reflected the mercury vapor of the Westcliff street lights. But during a recent power failure the lights remained undimmed.

Finally, the seekers for a plausible explanation confessed their total bafflement. None of the theories would hold water. The lights could never be approached for a close enough look. As soon as anyone came too near, the lights would disappear, only to pop up again in another section of the cemetery. Photographers were engaged, but no one managed to capture the elusive blue lights on film.

At this point the oldtimers simply smile, gather a few children around them, and provide the fitting explanation for any classic ghost story. According to these men, the cemetery, which is still in use, became the final resting ground for many miners who died while mining precious ores. The flickering lights of the graveyard resemble the little lights worn on the miners' caps, and the old men in town say the lights belong to the restless souls of the miners, who still search for the gold they never found.

But even if this explanation is only a fairy tale, the ghostly blue lights of Silver Cliff are no fantasy. They continue to flicker for all to see.

A far more notorious ghost light is located in the tristate area of Spooksville, in a corner of Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. Spooksville's ghostly light is advertised as a tourist attraction, and brings in countless hordes of curious tourists, who are weary of visiting Civil War battlegrounds on their vacations.

The mysterious light, known variously as "lights in the sky," "spook lights," and "ghost lights" to the visitors and inhabitants of the region, has been officially dubbed a

UFO by the U.S. Air Force. This alone has caused the Spooksville area to be called the "UFO airport."

In appearance the ghost light resembles a bright lantern. Often the light dims before the spectators, then bounces back over the mountains in a brilliant blaze of light. Hundreds of first hand encounters with the mysterious ghost light are on record. These accounts demonstrate actual experiences with the unknown, sometimes frightening, but always interesting.

During World War II the U.S. Corps of Engineers scoured the entire area, using the latest scientific equipment. For weeks they tested caves, mineral deposits, highway routes, exhausting every possible explanation for the origin of the mystery lights. They finally left, confounded.

Just a few of the many accounts of spook lights are included below.

Louise Graham reported coming home in a school bus from a school carnival at Quapaw, Oklahoma. A ghost light perched on the rear window of the bus as though attempting to enter. Everyone in the bus was thoroughly frightened, and several of the women were screaming. Louise told her story in *Ghost Lights,* a pamphlet put out by Bob Loftin. "The light was so bright it temporarily blinded the bus driver and he had to stop the bus. Just as we stopped, the light went away."

Chester McMinn, of Quapaw, Oklahoma, wrote his story for *Ghost Lights,* also. He explained that when the weather got intolerably hot he liked to do his plowing in the evening. "Seems the old light felt real neighborly one night and decided to help me with my plowing. I couldn't see too well and I guess the old light sensed it, because he started hovering all over the field where I was plowing."

McMinn thought it was a good idea until the light suddenly darted in his direction. He says he "absolutely froze stiff" to the tractor. The kindly light, understanding his fear, politely sailed out of sight.

Other experiences with the light, even more hair-raising, describe the light appearing outside a car, hesitating, then materializing on the inside of the car. Some of the locals have a hard time believing that one, but more than one person has related it.

There are many more ghost lights haunting the nooks and crannies, mountain peaks and valleys of this planet, and so far all attemps at scientific explanation have been unsuccessful. Experts have tried to explain the phenomena by using the existing structure of physics. Perhaps, if we are ever to truly understand these mysterious fires and lights, it will be necessary to go outside the existing structure to find the answers.

For there are strange lights that cannot be said to be the property of an existing, or still-to-be-discovered physics. There are lights that seem to shine directly from the psychic world, transcending this material earth plane. One such light was seen by Flora M. Shaw on an otherwise dark night in Atlanta, Georgia.

It was April 15, 1918, and young Flora was asked by her grandmother, with whom she and her mother lived, to take the ax and chop some dead pine.

"I can't finish dinner unless I've got more wood to put on the fire."

"But Grandmother," Flora protested, gazing outside the door to the darkness beyond, "It's too dark to even see any wood to chop!"

Grandmother Bowers started to be strict with the girl, then softened. "You just get started, Flora, and I'll be right along with a lantern."

Grateful for the assistance, Flora headed out the door with the ax and found a limb. She was just beginning to chop when the whole yard lit up as though it were bright day. Flora turned to look for her grandmother, but the older woman was not there. The girl looked toward the tops of the illuminated pines and saw something that resembled a statue moving across the sky, coming from the east.

Flora let out a shriek and alerted her grandmother, who ran to the girl's side. Together they watched the aerial phenomenon for almost ten minutes. When it disappeared the yard was still bathed in brilliant light. Gradually that too began to fade, rolling up like a scroll in the eastern part of the sky.

"It must have been an angel," whispered Flora in an awed voice.

"Look!" cried Grandmother Bowers. "Coming from your bedroom!"

Flora stared in wonder and fright as a fireball came out of the bedroom she and her mother shared. Slowly it circled the house, then wended its way down the path the young girl's mother traveled to and from work. Immediately after the fireball had disappeared, the three family dogs began to howl. They got up from under the house where they had been lying, and followed the same path the fireball had taken.

On that day Flora's mother had been in good health and at work. Two weeks later, on April 26, 1918, she was dead of double pneumonia.

What was the strange light and the mysterious statue they saw that night? Flora Shaw and Bertha Bowers believe it was the Angel of Death.

Similar lights were at play early in the 1900's in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. In the June, 1968, issue of *Fate* Arlene O. Meyers told the story of her mother, Laura Jeanette.

Several times a year Laura and her husband loaded up the wagon, hitched up the horses, and made the two-and-a-half-mile trip into town. There they traded farm products for staples.

On this particular occasion their usual autumn trip had been delayed owing to the illness of Laura's husband, and it was already winter when they made the decision to go.

When they had finished their trading in town, they stopped off for supper with some relatives. During the course of the meal Laura's husband became violently ill.

The relatives insisted that he stay for the night, and Laura agreed that that would be a good plan. But she could not think of remaining with him and leaving the five children home alone to worry. Telling everyone she would send her two oldest boys the following morning to pick up their father, Laura began the two-and-a-half-mile trek home by herself.

When she got out onto the road, however, she discovered it was pitch-black. She began to fear she would not be able to see at all, and her thoughts strayed to the reports of a wild cougar that had been molesting cattle in the area. To forestall her fears, she began to pray.

A safe and peaceful feeling had begun to spread over her when suddenly a light appeared in front of the horses, illuminating the road ahead. Laura breathed a sigh of relief. Now she need not fear the darkness.

The beneficent light preceded her all the way home, illuminating every step of her way. When she arrived at the farm she awakend one of her sons to help unhitch the horses.

The following morning the son came downstairs, expecting to find the stranger who had held the light. But there was no stranger present. Laura never wavered in her belief that it was God who had held the light.

It is easy to understand why a religious person might interpret such a light as emanating from God. And the circumstances of the two experiences just related resemble the accounts of saintly signs and visions. If Flora and Laura had had experiences in the Middle Ages there would have been no doubt in anyone's mind as to the source of the light. Science and technology demand that we state these occurences in scientific and technological terms, even as the religious hierarchy would have demanded they be interpreted theologically in its period of dominion.

The purpose of this discussion is not to make historical or sociological judgments upon either sytle of thought, but simply to point out that we use the words of the predominant discipline of the day. And who is to say that we are not describing the same phenomenon, cloaked in the acceptable fashion of the times? Perhaps after we have successfully moved through church-oriented explanations and science-oriented explanations we may discover the kernel of truth in each, and manage to come closer to the actual meaning of these phenomena.

There is yet another way of interpreting these events, and that is psychically, or spiritually. Ectoplasm is described as being a greenish-yellow substance that rises from the body after death like a vapor. Ectoplasm is not mortal, and therefore not bound to the earth plane. When the body it has inhabited dies, it is released and, having completed its earthly mission is free to take its designated place in the universe.

With these thoughts about ectoplasm in mind, read the following:

> The strangest sight of all came with the very first ray of sunrise as I was crossing the Pacific toward the U.S. I was checking the instrument panel and when I looked back out the window I thought for a minute that I must have tumbled upside-down and was looking up at a new field of stars. I checked my instruments to make sure I was right-side up. Then I looked again. There, spread out as far as I could see, were literally thousands of tiny luminous objects that glowed in the black sky like fireflies. I was riding slowly through them, and the sensation was like walking backwards through a pasture where someone had waved a wand and made all the fireflies stop right where they were and glow steadily. They were greenish yellow in color, and they appeared to be about six to 10 feet apart. I seemed to be passing through them at a speed of from three to five miles an hour. They were all around me, and those nearest the capsule would occasionally move across the window as if I had slightly interrupted their flow. On the next pass I turned the capsule around so that I was looking right into the flow, and thought I could see far fewer of them in the light of the rising sun, they were still there. Watching them come toward me, I felt certain they were not caused by anything emanating from the capsule. I thought perhaps I'd stumbled into the lost batch of needles the Air Force had tried to set up in orbit for communications purposes. But I could think of no reason why needles should glow like fireflies, nor did they look like needles. As far as I know, the true identity of these particles is still a mystery.

The above quotation was taken from *Life* magazine of March 9, 1962. It was written by Lieutenant Colonel John Glenn, shortly, after his epic solo orbit of the earth.

Were the particles that Glenn saw actually ectoplasm? And do these strange greenish-yellow lights have anything in common with Spooksville's ghost light? Or Flora Shaw's luminescent backyard? Or the blue fireballs of Joliet? Or the shafts of light that so terrorized Mary Jimenez and her mother?

The question is: Are we dealing with separate phenomena in the differing fields of religious, scientific, and psychic thought? Or are we dealing with the same phenomena dressed in the specific nomenclature of these various disciplines? Will we ever be able to strip aside our preconditioned ways of looking at things to discover what these phenomena truly represent?

Will we ever know what—or who—pulls the strings to make those flickering lights dance upon the earth?

X

The Mystery of Lost Civilizations

Who built the serpentine temple in Brittany that winds along for eight miles and contains more than 10,000 massive stones, 300 of which are over fifteen feet in height?

What physical, or mental, giants constructed the pre-Incan Andean fortress of Sacsahuaman? The essential mystery of Sacsahuaman is how primitive Peruvians were able to hoist several hundred stone blocks, some of which weigh over 200 tons, more than two miles above sealevel.

Whose features inspired the gigantic stone faces scattered about Easter Island?

What primitive religionists fashioned the Baalbeck platforms in Syria? By what means did they raise stone slabs weighing 1,200 tons each to the top of fifty-four pillars that reach more than ninety feet into the desert air?

And can the reader conceive of the ancient peoples who constructed the famous Black Pagoda? The temple stands 228 feet high and supports a single stone slab that is estimated to weigh 2,000 tons! What modern derrick

could hoist a 2,000-ton bulk without collapsing under such a massive burden?

Has civilization been cyclical? Has mankind reached heights of technological advancement comparable or even superior to our own, only to pass away to dust and then, phoenix-like, rise from its own ashes and begin the ascent all over again? Or have "gods" from UFO's descended from time to time in our own recorded history to aid man in erecting some of these truly "impossible" edifices?

What is more fascinating than taking a peep at the past? In the dust of long-forgotten civilizations lie lessons, perhaps warnings, for our own time. In crumbling villages once lived men and women who loved, struggled, desired success, fought failure, and were subject to the same failings of the flesh that blight us today. But we know so little about them—in some cases, we do not even know their names; in other instances, we see their names proudly displayed, but the people themselves have vanished, totally and inexplicably, almost overnight.

There is much evidence of early explorers on our own continent:

On September 6, 1969, James P. Whittall, Jr., an archaeologist for the New England Antiquities Research Association, announced that radiocarbon testing of some strange stone structures in New England proved they had been erected about 3,000 years ago. Artifacts found in stone chambers near the structures indicated that the monoliths had been built by a culture similar to those that inhabited the Mediterranean from about 3,000 B.C. to 500 B.C.

Whittall's pet theory is that the stones are very similar to work done by the megalithic culture known to have inhabited the Iberian peninsula. Other experts theorize that the structures may be of Phoenician orgin. A number of archaelogists have long held that certain Bronze Age explorers may have successfully challenged the Atlantic and found their way to America. Dr. Stephen Williams, head of Harvard's Peabody Museum, however, says that the mysterious stone structures were put up by American colonists.

Anyone for an Atlantean expedition that might have planted the monoliths after the destruciton of their missing continent? Atlanteans or not, it certainly appears that some quite advanced civilization got to America long before Columbus, the Vikings, or any Mediterranean culture.

What does the word *iynkicidu* mean to you? The *Report of the Smithsonian Institution,* 1881-619, told of a pair of tiny silver crosses unearthed in Georgia. The workmanship is exquisite and the engraving on their backs reads IYNKICIDU. The "c" and the "d" are turned backward, but the inscription is made up of the same kind of letters we use to write out everything from books to shopping lists.

A Reverend Grass opened a number of mounds near Davenport, Illinois, and discovered several large tablets. One looked like a street marker and bore the legend IF-TOWNS. But Amerindians did not use the alphabet, nor did they mark their villages and streets.

Amerindians did not use coins, either, yet a number of caches of really unusual coins have been unearthed on the North American continent.

During September, 1833, workmen boring for water near Norfolk, Virginia, found a coin that experts declared was stamped with figures representing "a warrior or hunter and other characters, apparently of Roman origin."

Jacob W. Moffit of Chillicothe, Illinois, brought up a coin while drilling at a depth of 120 feet. Moffit saw upon the coin "tokens of the machine shop," but a Professor Leslie dismissed it as an astrological talisman with the signs of Pisces and Leo and a legend inscribed upon it in a language "somewhere between Arabic and Phoenician without being either."

Although Professor Leslie made no accusation against Moffit, he stated that the coin had been planted in the ground by a practical joker—a practical joker, we might add, who was willing to dig down 120 feet and sit by patiently chortling and waiting until someone decided to drill in the precise spot where his bogus coin lay covered by tons of soil. A Professor Winchell, however, said that the symbols on the coin had been etched there with acid.

Who worked the copper mines of Lake Superior? Here are extensive mines that were obviously worked by a people highly skilled in the techniques of extracting various ores from earth and stone. The local Indian tribes, however, have absolutely no tradition relating to these mines, and not a single artifact or bit of bone has ever been found to betray the identity of these prehistoric miners. Could they have been the miners of the mysterious copper coins that keep turning up around the United States?

In May, 1953, workers of the Lion Coal Cops Wattis mine of Wattis, Utah, broke into a vast network of tunnels that appeared to be of great antiquity. Pockets of coal within these strange tunnels had oxidized to the stage where coal could nearly be scooped up with the bare hands. The miners also reported finding rooms where the coal had been processed.

What is thought to be the oldest of all lost mines in North America was found in 1961 on the Mojave Desert, southeast of Twenty-nine Palms, California. Barry Storm, the discoverer, contends that highly skilled prehistoric Mayans worked the site for jade when the desert country was a series of lush valleys. Radiocarbon testings indicate that the mine was in operation around 1500 B.C., but it seems unlikely that the same Mayans journeyed up to Utah for their coal, too.

When the Incas were a flourishing empire, the remains of a city they named Tiahuanaco, "city of the dead," were ancient ruins. Bits of pottery and other artifacts indicate that the city may be 20,000 years old, and that its unknown inhabitants may have created a culture in prehistoric Bolivia that was as advanced and sophisticated as any known to modern man.

From what little evidence is available for study, experts have determined that the inhabitants of Tiahuanaco were a much taller people than the present dwellers of the high plateau. Nor did they have the prominent cheekbones that one generally associates with the Amerindians of the region.

In 1964, in Peru, Professor Frederic Engel and his assistants discovered the ruins of a city at least 9,000 years old. When they unearthed the skeletal remains of the former inhabitants, they found that these people, too, were taller than the present tribes of the area. But, again, it is an anthropological mystery just exactly who these people were.

The remains of an ancient city 6,000 feet beneath the surface of the ocean off the coast of Lima, Peru, were discovered in 1966, by Dr. Robert J. Menzies, who was exploring the Milne-Edward Deep, a depression nearly 19,000 feet deep in some regions. Old Inca ruins dot the nearby shore, and archaeologists are convinced that the remains of even older civilizations are certain to be documented and discovered as time goes on, but a city that lies 6,000 feet under the sea could, indeed, lead to what Dr. Menzies speculated could be "one of the most exciting discoveries of this century, insofar as ruins go."

Such a find cannot help reminding one of the fabled lost continent of Atlantis. Professor Anghelos Galanopoulos, a Greek seismologist, has theorized that the legend of Atlantis sprang from the destruction of an ancient metropolis on the island of Thera in the Aegean Sea. Professor Galanopoulos maintains that a volcano exploded with such violence that nearly two-thirds of the island was destroyed.

He has been encouraged by the findings of a group on the American research ship *Chain* led by Dr. James W. Mavor of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Professor Galanopoulos was especially delighted by the discovery, early in 1967, of a wide moat in the submerged ruins of Thera. *The New York Times* quoted him as stating:

> Plato, the ancient philosopher, who gave the fullest description of Atlantis, wrote that the hill that stood in the center of the Metropolis island was surrounded by a moat, which served as a secure harbor. This moat, which encircled the acropolis of the Metropolis, was one of Atlantis' main features. This discovery is one of the most convincing proofs that the legendary Atlantis has been located.

Well, maybe, but there are other theorists who have located other convincing proofs of the "true" location of Atlantis, not to mention the many mystical interpretations of the legendary continent. Actually, from all descriptions extant in ancient texts, a small island in the Aegean Sea just does not seem to be of heroic enough proportions to qualify as a very convincing site for Atlantis.

A recent discovery has cast new light on another legendary continent. Just when all the sophisticates and scientists had "proved" that James Churchward's tomes on the lost continent of Mu were nothing but literary hoaxes, Dr. Albert C. Smith, a botanist with the United States National Museum, announced that he had new evidence that the islands of the southwestern Pacific were but land fragments of an ancient Melanesian continent.

According to Dr. Smith, who may never have heard of Mu but who inadvertently reactivated the controversy in 1956, a statistical analysis of Fijian flora shows an overwhelming affinity with the plants of Malaysia, especially those of New Guinea, the Solomons, and the New Hebrides. In the estimation of Dr. Smith, and of numerous other anthropologists and archaeologists, the evidence strongly supports the theory that a land mass of considerable size formerly existed in the Pacific.

In 1965, Professor Dragoslav Srejovec of the University of Belgrade, Yugoslavia, discovered remains indicating that civilization, rather than spreading outward from the Middle East, existed in the Balkans at the same time the most primitive neolothic villages existed in the Middle East. Massive sandstone faces that may have represented household deities were dug up along the banks of the Danube River at Lepinsky Vir, about sixty miles from Belgrade. Extensive excavation later produced the remains of a town that dated back to approximately 7000 B.C., according to readiocarbon dating techniques.

Professor Srejovec commented: "These were an artistic people, a religious people. Their sense of mystery and their expression of it remind one of the paleolithic cave paintings at Lascaux, but the highly complex layout of their town shows they are at least a preneolithic people."

One of the great mysteries in South American archaeological and anthropological studies is why the Mayans, who were ignorant of the wheel and had no vehicles or carts, built some of the broadest highways in the world. An extraordinary boulevard at Dziblilchaltun is said to be wide enough to park eight modern automobiles side by side. These avenues made of limestone blocks and surfaced with limestone cement stretch out for miles across mountains and jungles.

There is another anthropological-archaelogical puzzler in Kentucky. How did a two-tined iron fork find its way into a prehistoric Amerindain gravesite near Eddyville? Chickasaws occupied the grounds between A.D. 1200 and 1500, but Amerindians possessed no iron utensils.

An iron fork in an ancient Amerindian gravesite is one kind of trouble, but misplaced mummies stir up a special kind of weird brew. Egyptians made a whole religious-

cultural ritual out of the proper preservation for the dead, but who prepared the thirty mummies excavators found in eastern Sonora State, Mexico? Thirty of them, perfectly preserved, dressed in rich clothing and lavish jewelry, obviously of the priesthood—all more than 10,000 years old—were found resting in a large cave sealed with a huge boulder. Thus far, no clues have been found to suggest what vanished Mexican civilization might have preserved the bodies of their dead in the manner of the Egyptians.

While some undetermined culture was busy making mummies in Mexico, another mysterious lost people was industriously shaping large stone spheres in the hot tropical forests of Costa Rica. Some of the weird balls weigh only a few pounds, but others are as large as eight feet in diameter and weigh more than sixteen tons. Scientists dug under the balls, seeking hidden burial places, but found nothing. Some are arranged in rows, others in circles, still others in triangles. The round stones may have been used for religious purposes or in an attempt to chart the stars, but no one can know for certain.

Speaking of stones, there is always that controversial Kensington Runestone to irritate scholars. According to one school of thought, the 202-pound slab with its runic inscription discovered in Alexandria, Minnesota, offers the most rock-solid proof that the Vikings discovered America long before Columbus set sail to find a shortcut to India. Although it now appears that the Vikings, the Welsh, and maybe some Mediterranean peoples dared the Atlantic centuries before Columbus Day, the authenticity of the Kensington Runestone has not been established.

Historian Hjalmar Holand spent fifty years attempting to prove that it is genuine. Holand's translation of the inscription on the front of the stone reads:

"We are 8 Swedes and 22 Norwegians on an exploring journey from Finland through the West. We had a camp by the lake with two Rocky islands. One day's trip north from this stone. We were out and fished one day. After we came home we found 11 of our men red with blood and dead. Ave Maria. Save us from this evil."

The markings on the side of the rock read: "We have 10 of our party by the sea to look after our ships. Fourteen days trip from this island. Year 1362."

Holand believed the survivors of the Indian raid settled down with the Mandan Indians and that it was their blond, blue-eyed descendants whose un-Indian-like appearance astounded members of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

In Rhodesia, Africa, lie the Zimbabwe ruins, an ancient temple comprising more than one million six-by-six-by-twelve-inch granite blocks. What is so startling about Zimbabue is that absolutely no quarry rock or granite exists within hundreds of miles of the temple. What sadistic monarch of priesthood must have imposed its will upon thousands of subjects or slaves and forced them to carry one million granite blocks a distance of up to one thousand miles?

There are hundreds of such archaelogical and anthropological oddities. With a bit of research one could easily compile a volume of ponderous proportions about seemingly impossible primitive engineering feats and the perplexing question, Who constructed all these massive monuments, temples, and deserted cities? How little we know of the past, and, alas, how very much the past might be able to tell us about our future.

XI

Giants, Monsters, and Skeletons of Great Size

> Man has always needed monsters, and he still does. Our mythical beasts are part of the need to know what we are, to find the monstrosity from which we rose—the missing link, the hairy thighs. But coeval to our need of him is the monster's own need to escape. That is why there is always some impairment in the one who sights the monsters. He is drunk, he is running for his life, he is five years old, his camera is defective, he is blinded by the snow or mad after three days in the desert. All this is as it should be. A monster should be heard but not seen. Not quite. The fog, flames or chasm between it and us is more than traditional. It is mandatory. A monster must be dimly glimpsed.

These words of Shana Alexander were printed in the December 8, 1967, issue of *Life* magazine. She was writing about a persistent part of man's collective unconscious: the gargantuan beast. And, very perceptively, she revealed our compelling desire to discover this possible "missing link," but, at the same time, to keep him in the comfortable background of our minds should he ever prove too embarrassing a relative.

Info, the Fortean towncrier, never allows such observations to slide out of sight to preserve someone else's comfort. Volume 1, Number 3 of *Info* highlighted an article from the Houston (Texas) *Chronicle* of December 14, 1966.

According to this article, an archaelogical expedition on the hunt for Indian relics found its way to the outskirts of Blythe, California, along the Colorado River. Here they found giant footprints marching across the desert plateau.

"We don't know the age of the prints, who made them, or why," commented Dr. Emma Lou Davis, head of the expedition and staff member of San Diego's Museum of Man.

In all, ten horseshoe-shaped prints, each three feet in diameter, were found. Flanking the ten prints were two straight rows of ten circular impressions each. Close by these patterns were ten piles of rocks, and between the patterns lay thin sheets of rusted steel and iron. No one in the Blythe area could shed any light on the mysterious desert formations.

Other markings visible in the sand were a perfectly preserved Indian dance circle, which the archaeologists believed to be several hundred years old, and faint tank treads thought to have been made during 1944 army maneuvers, located thirty-five miles southwest of Blythe. Dr. Davis informed the press of her intent to ask Washington for any possible clue, or military significance, of the prints.

The strange prints were also examined by the Bureau of Land Management. Though the Interior Department labeled the markings "an archaeological site that may or may not be Indian," the Bureau of Land Management simply admitted it was a mystery.

Info decided to follow this one up by writing Dr. Davis a letter of inquiry. The letter was returned with the following handwritten note on the bottom of the page: " 'Tracks' were remains of recent U.S. Army desert maneuvers. No comment. E. L. Davis." *Info* interpreted this action as evasive, indicating the concealment of information. The journal felt that Dr. Davis' original description did not lead "even a blind man" to "think that these impressions are tank tracks."

Did Dr. Davis really come across the impressions of army maneuvers, or was it our elusive monster keeping one step ahead of "the chasm between it and us"?

Monsters need not restrict themselves to the giant hairy form, however. A giant of any species could qualify as monstrous. In our literary imagery we often refer to gorillas, apes, elephants, and whales as "monsters." There are many "giants" that walk the earth, as there have been many in the past. Not the least of these is man.

In the June, 1954, issue of *Galaxy*, Willy Ley devoted his regular column "For Your Information" to a discussion of the giants in the animal kingdom, past and present. He began with the land mammals, the largest of which is the African elephant. An old bull elephant may stand as high as eleven feet and weigh six to eight tons. The nearest runnerup in size is the Indian elephant, which averages half a foot shorter and a ton lighter than its African cousin.

In the past, a particular European variety of mammoth topped the African elephant by thirty inches, and another extinct elephant, *Elephas trogontherii*, rose ten inches taller than the mammoth.

Far and away the largest land mammal of all time was the hornless rhinoceros, which lived in southern Asia during the Tertiary period. This beast stood eighteen feet high and reached a length of twenty-seven feet. Ley pointed out that the present Indian rhinoceros could have walked under this distant ancestor without ducking.

However, the marine mammals of our own day hold the record, exceeding in size everything that moves now or ever has moved. The largest of these is the blue rorqual. The length of this leviathan has been recorded at anywhere from eighty to a fantastic 100 feet. The weight of a full-grown specimen is estimated at 150 tons. This tops even the huge brontosaurus, which weighed in at a mere thirty-eight tons.

Proceeding to the birds, two categories must be introduced: the largest by wingspread and the largest by weight. The wandering albatross takes the prize in the first category, sporting a wingspread of twelve feet and a weight of fifteen pounds at its largest. Both the South American and the Californian condor are easy winners by weight, having a wingspread of eleven feet and a weight of thirty-one pounds. For flightless birds the African ostrich nudges out all competitors. It looks down from a height of eight feet and weighs 160 pounds.

The most massive of the prehistoric birds was the *Diatryma gigantea* from the lower Eocene of Wyoming. This heavy ancestor of today's cranes had a skull almost twenty inches long and a fearsome beak equally long. Standing at seven feet, it had a massive bulk of 300 pounds.

In the reptilian category it is common knowledge that past secies walk away with all honors. But today's Indian crocodile would still be no delight for a swimmer to come upon. One specimen of this underwater demon was thirty-three feet long and thirteen feet, eight inches, in circumference. Turtles reach an overall length of nine feet by six and one-half feet, and can weigh as much as 1,450 pounds. The South American anaconda, the largest living snake, uncoils to a length of twenty to twenty-five feet.

Of the prehistoric reptiles, the dinosaur brontosaurus was probably the largest. Cousin diplodocus was probably the longest, due to its excessively long tail. From the tip of its nose to the end of its tail it measured seventy to seventy-five feet. *Archelon ischyros,* a marine turtle of the past, was approximately thirteen and one-half feet long and weighed about 3,500 pounds.

Ley continues rating the amphibians, fishes, insects, crustaceans, etc., but here the giants are largely relative to the other members of their species. He concludes, however, with an observation on man as monster and giant. Indeed, man belongs in the one percent of all earth life that qualifies for the title "giant." Man averages a height of five and one-half feet and a weight of 130 pounds, with extremes of eight and one-half feet and 600 pounds. He boasts an armspread of five to eight feet, and as Ley points out, what is small about that?

If a certain M. le Cat is to be believed, there have been humans who would have thought that small. M. le Cat provided some information on giants for the general edification of the British reading public in the January 11, 1840, issue of the London *Mirror.*

According to M. le Cat, two human skeletons were discovered by the Athenians near their city. The length of one was an unbelievable thirty-four feet; the other was an incredible two feet longer. A somewhat shorter relative, only thirty feet in length, was found near Palermo, Sicily, in 1548.

Two years after the Sicilian discovery, another skeleton was unearthed, this one measuring thirty-three feet. Finally, another giant skeleton, this one thirty feet long, saw the light of day.

M. Le Cat then asserted that in 1705 a twenty-two-foot skeleton was found, and the thigh bone was preserved at Valencia, Spain. Another skeleton was found, the skull of which allegedly held a bushel of corn. If these skeletal remains have indeed been preserved, one wishes that a modern scientist would go to Valencia, or Sicily, and substantiate these claims.

Other historical accounts of giant-sized skeletons include that of the Abbe Nazari. This venerable man noted that a body exhumed in Calabria, Italy, measured eighteen Roman feet. The average weight of the molars was one ounce. And Hector Boetius, in the seventh book of the *History of Scotland,* declares that the bones of a fourteen-foot man, who had been jokingly nicknamed Little John, were preserved.

A more recent sighting of giants was reported in a July, 1966, Reuters bulletin from Rio de Janeiro, which stated that members of the peaceful Mekranonti, Kaiabi, and Mundurucu tribes of the Caiapo nation had lodged official complaints against giants who were killing hunters and villagers. The complaints were relayed by Brazilian Air Force cadets who had been receiving jungle-survival training among the Indians on the Xingu National Indian Reservation. The cadets stated that they were shown extremely large bows and stone axes that the Indians had brought back with them after battles with their jungle enemies.

The harassed Indians called their jungle foes *Kremaokarores,* or "pudding-basin haircuts." The name is derived from the peculiar headgear of the giants. The huge warriors, the cadets were told, wore "white feathers stuck into a resinous substance smeared over a shaved patch on their heads."

The most recent information about these mysterious giants was that the Brazilian Indian Protection Service was organizing a thirty-nine-man expedition to investigate the claims of the Indians, and, if possible, to establish communication with the unknown tribe. The expedition was to be headed by Francisco Meirelles, one of the service's most experienced scouts, and he expected to reach the vicinity of the giants by July 25, 1966.

Unfortunately, none of the news services has carried any report on the results of this expedition, so it is not known whether it was successful. Did the group find the jungle giants? Did they manage to establish contact with them? Or did they perhaps run into a few of those primitive bows and stone axes? Word may yet be released on their efforts.

These giants of the Amazon may well exist, for just west of Lake Victoria, in Africa, living side by side with the world's smallest ethnic group, the pygmies, is the towering Watusi tribe.

One of the first indications that a taller race once inhabited North America came with the discovery in Supai Canyon, Arizona, of a picture depicting a mammoth attacking a man. This painting was found by Harold T. Wilkins, who determined that the man must have been over ten feet tall. Indians in the vicinity stated that the drawings were made by "the giants of long ago." This particular phrase pops up more than once in this field of research.

A skull found in one of the many cliffdwellings near Winslow, Arizona, was described by Jesse T. Benton, in *Cow By the Tail,* as being so large that a stetson sat on it "like one of those tiny hats merrymakers wear on New Year's." Benton also stated that a gold tooth had been found in the skull, ruling out the possibility that it had been a part of an animal, rather than a giant man.

According to their oral tradition, the Delaware Indians once lived in the western United States. For an unknown reason, at some point in their history, they migrated eastward as far as the Mississippi River, where they were joined by the Iroquois tribe. Both tribes were seeking land better suited to their way of life and they continued together on their eastward trek.

Scouts sent ahead learned of a large nation that inhabited the land east of the Mississippi and had built strong cities. The name of these people was Talligewi or Alhegewi, after whom the Allegheny River and Mountains are named. This tribe was considerably taller than the Iroquois or the Delawares, and there were a good many giants among them.

When the two migrating tribes asked for permission to pass through the country, it was denied, and bitter fighting broke out, which continued for a number of years. Finally the Alhegewi fled to the west.

They then appear in the legends of the Sioux, whose tradition tells of a race of "great stature, but very cowardly." The Sioux exterminated the Alhegewi when they arrived in Minnesota.

What archaeological evidence do we have to substantiate these Indian traditions? Rising out of the earth in both Ohio and Minnesota are the huge remains of the mysterious "mound-builders." The mounds in both areas were apparently raised by the same people, and they are extremely large. Do these giant mounds indicate giant people?

Enormous weapons, including a copper axe weighing thirty-eight pounds, have been found in these mounds. Would an average-sized man casually wield a thirty-eight-pound ax? However, such implements alone are not proof of a giant race. The best proof would be the skeletons of these people, if they could be found.

They have.

Several years ago two brothers living in Dresbach, Minnesota, decided to enlarge their brick business. To do so, they had to remove several large Indian mounds, and in one of these mounds they unearthed the bones of "men over eight feet tall." Unfortunately these bones crumbled when exposed to the air, so their existence rests on the word of the Minnesota brothers.

In La Crescent, Minnesota, not far from Dresbach, mound-diggers found large skillets and "bones of men of huge stature."

In Chatfield, Minnesota, mounds were excavated, revealing six skeletons of enormous size.

The unusually large skeletons of seven people buried head down were discovered in Clearwater, Minnesota. The skulls reportedly had receding foreheads, and teeth were double all the way around.

Other Minnesota discoveries included "men of more than ordinary size" in Moose Island Lake; several skeletons, one of "gigantic size," in Pine City; ten skeletons "of both sexes and of gigantic size" in Warren (buried with these particular specimens were horses, badgers, and dogs).

What was (and is) the reaction of anthropologists at these fantastic finds? Are they excitedly pursuing and tracking down these reports?

The Fortean Society wrote to Professor Wilford at the University of Minnesota anthropology department, asking his opinion of the reports and inquiring whether he had ever found any giant bones on his numerous field trips. His reply was short and to the point. He had never come across any bones other than normal size; he believed the reports to be erroneous.

In Pine City there was one skeleton of enormous size. In Warren, skeletons of both sexes and of "gigantic size" were unearthed. If the bones were simply inordinately large, they would have been noted as being only big. But the report said they were gigantic. That would seem to be excessive exaggeration in describing merely an overgrown man.

Fairy tales are something every child believes in, and wants to believe in, as long as he can. The romance and imagery of childhood is something we all must put away eventually, but it is also something we save for our own children, and in that way we never truly release it. For the child who becomes the father of the man, it will always be true that: "There were giants in the earth in those days. . . ."

XII

Who are the Little People?

In May, 1958, a group of workmen found out that one should not try to cross the fairies, not even in the twentieth century.

The trouble began when the workmen began digging a hole for an electric-power pole in a small mound outside Wexford, Ireland. The villagers warned the workmen that the mound was a rath of the "Little People." A rath, for those untutored in such matters, is a dwelling place of the Wee Folk.

When the townspeople told the workmen that the pole would never stay there, the electricians were quick to scoff at such childish superstitions. The very idea, suggesting that the fairies could dislodge a pole they had so expertly sunk into the earth of the mound! The fairies would have a hard time of it if they chose to pry loose a pole that hearty workmen from the state electricity board had set in place.

The next morning, however, the large pole tilted awkwardly in loose earth.

"Those flaming idiots," the foreman scowled toward the village. "They think they can have a bit of fun with us with their flaming fairies, eh? Some of the fun-loving clods crept out here during the night and wiggled this pole loose."

The pole was ordered reset with an extra bit of tamping.

The next morning, the pole again rested loosely in the churned-up earth. Other poles in the line stood straight and firm, but the pole set in the fairy rath tilted to the side slightly drunkenly.

The foreman decided that he had had enough of the villagers' game. He ordered the hole to be dug six feet wide. Once this had been accomplished, he placed the pole precisely in the middle and packed the earth so firmly around its base that, he thought, nothing short of an atomic bomb could hope to loosen it.

Came the dawn, and the workmen knew they were defeated: The objectionable pole had been pushed free of the Wee Folk's rath.

Ignoring the knowing grins of the villagers, the workmen dug a second hole four feet outside the fairy mound. Undisturbed by Little People or husky pranksters, the pole stands there today as solid as a rock.

In 1962, some enterprising gentlemen in a small village in Iceland decided to enlarge a herring-processing plant. According to Icelandic tradition, no landowner must fail to reserve a small plot of his property for the mysterious "Hidden Folk," and a few of the rural folk pointed out to the gentlemen that any extension of the plant would encroach upon the plot of ground that had been set aside for the little people.

The businessmen laughed. They possessed modern, unbreakable drills, plenty of dynamite to supplement the tirelessly gnawing teeth of the drill bits, and a topnotch crew of highly qualified men to operate the equipment. Progress would not be held up by ridiculous superstitions.

But the bits of the "unbreakable" drill began to shatter one after the other. An old farmer came forward to repeat the warning that they were trespassing on land that belonged to the Hidden Folk. The workmen, secure in their education and enlightenment, laughed at the aged man and expressed their smug shock that such a doddering, superstitious old fool could still exist in modern, jet-age Iceland.

But the drill bits kept breaking.

Finally, the manager of the plant, although professing disbelief in such prattle, agreed to the old farmer's suggestion that he consult a local seer to establish contact with the Hidden Folk of the area to try to make peace with them. In a trance, the seer told the manager that there was one particularly powerful entity who had selected this plot as his dwelling place.

The Hidden One was not unreasonable, however. After the seer had explained that the businessmen really needed the extra room for expansion, the entity agreed to find another place to live. The Hidden One only asked for some time to make his arrangements. If the manager would forestall the drilling for five days, the entity would have had time enough to find another plot of ground.

The manager felt a bit weird bargaining with something he could not even see, but he glanced at the pile of broken drill bits and told the seer that the Hidden One had a deal. When five days had passed, the workmen resumed drilling. From then on, the work went efficiently and not another bit was broken on the "unbreakable" drill.

Admittedly, such tales sound as if they came from a time much earlier than our own, but whatever strange powers the Little People exerted over their human neighbors in centuries past seem to be just as potent today. What were, or are, the fairies of legend, folklore, and—dare we say it—fact?

They may have been the surviving remnants of a past civilization and a species of man of diminutive stature.

These "Wee Folk" may have been quite advanced and may have possessed a technology that seemed magical to the migrating barbarians who later became the established people in the area. The wee ones may have died out, they may have been assimilated into the encroaching culture by intermarriage, or they may have gone underground.

In most traditions, especially in the British Isles and Scandinavia, the fairy folk were supernormal entities who inhabited magical kingdoms beneath the surface of the earth. Fairies have always been considered to be very much akin to men, but they have always been known to be something more than mortal men. The fairies have never been popularly conceived of as belonging solely to the realm of spirit. As many of the ancient texts declare, the fairies are "of a middle nature betwixt Man and Angel." One factor has been consistent in fairy lore. The "middle folk" continually meddle in the affairs of man, sometimes to work him good, sometimes to do him evil.

Some biblically oriented authorities have sought to cast the fairies in the role of the rebellious angels who were driven out of Heaven during the celestial uprising instigated by Lucifer. These dispossessed angels, or demons, depending upon one's point of view, took up new abodes on Earth, materialized in human bodies, and took humans as mates, breeding, of course, a hybrid race of entities "betwixt Man and Angel."

In the December, 1920, issue of *Strand Magazine* in London, there were published several allegedly authentic photographs of real fairies. The pictures were said to have been taken near the village of Cottingley by two young girls, Elsie Wright and her cousin Frances Griffiths, who had only a cheap camera.

Sir Arthur Conal Doyle managed to obtain the negatives and brought them to one of England's most eminent photographic analysts. At first the man laughed at the whole idea of fairy photographs, but, amazingly he ended up making a public statement that he was quite willing to

risk his professional reputation that, ". . . the photographs were single exposures . . . all of the figures of the fairies had actually moved during the exposure which was instantaneous." Furthermore, he declared, he could find not even the slightest evidence of fakery in the pictures.

Sir Arthur insisted on obtaining the opinion of another photographic expert. He took the strange negatives to the Kodak Company's offices in Kingsway. These experts declined to go on record that the girls had photographed actual fairies, but they did issue a statement that they could find no evidence of trick photography or of anyone having tampered with the film. They also emphasized that they could find no flaws of any kind in the negatives.

Yet another analyst observed that while such effects might be duplicated by some exceedingly clever studio painting, the most significant factor in the Cottingley photographs was that the fairy figures had actually been caught in motion.

The photographs had been taken in a little valley through which ran a narrow stream. Elsie Wright first made the acquaintance of the fairies and she introduced them at once to her cousin. One snapshot taken by Elsie in the summer of 1917, when she was sixteen, captures her ten-year-old cousin seated on the grass surrounded by a group of four dancing fairies. Another, taken a few months later, shows Elsie with a tiny gnome.

According to a reporter for the *Westminster Gazette,* who journeyed to Cottingley to investigate the circumstances surrounding the photographs for his paper, "No other people have seen the fairies, though everybody in the little village knew of their existence . . . Mrs. Wright . . . without hesitation narrated the whole of the circumstances without adding any comment. The girls, she said, would spend the whole of the day in the narrow valley, even taking their lunch with them, though they were within a stone's throw of the house. . . ."

The story Mrs. Wright related was as follows: Elsie's father had acquired a camera and one Saturday afternoon allowed his daughter to take a picture. He loaded one plate in position and explained to her how to take a snapshot. Elsie and Frances returned after several minutes and asked Mr. Wright if he would develop the plate.

"While this was being done," the reporter wrote, "Elsie noticed that the fairies were beginning to show, and exclaimed in an excited tone to her cousin, 'Oh, Frances, the fairies are on the plate!' The second photograph was equally successful. . . ."

When the journalist pressed Wright for his version of how the photographs had come to be taken, he detailed the same story as his wife.

Elsie was quite uncommunicative about the matter, but at last yielded to the newsman's persistence and agreed to answer his queries.

Where did the fairies come from?

She did not know.

Had she seen them arrive?

Yes, but she still had not seen from whence they had come.

Had she seen them before the time she took the famous photographs?

Yes, she and Frances had seen them since they were very small children.

Had they told anyone of their seeing fairies?

Yes, and the plates were in the possession of Mr. Gardner, president of the Theosophical Society.

Had anyone else in the village seen the fairies?

Evidently not, but they all took the girls' word for their experiences with them and they believed in the reality of the photographs. On occasion, the fairies had gone away when other mortals had approached them. She was convinced that only she and Frances had been granted the gift of seeing the Cottingley Little People.

The journalist presented his interview in an unbiased manner. He seemed either unwilling, or unable, to expose the story as a fraud, and neither he nor subsequent on-the-scene investigators were able to uncover the slightest shred of proof that Elsie and Frances had deliberately set out to perpetrate a hoax.

As the press spread the story of the Cottingley photographs around the world, numerous reputable individuals came forward to testify that they, too, had played with the Little People as children. More elaborate and more expensive cameras were sent to the girls in the hope that they might snap some additional photographs. And, according to Elsie, Frances, and others, images of fairies did indeed show up on the plates of the more sophisticated cameras.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle enlisted the services of one of England's most gifted clairvoyants to see if he might psychically verify the girls' accounts of fairies in the little valley. The man sat down with the girls and found that he was able to see even more than they because of his mediumistic abilities. According to his sensitive vision, the entire glen was alive with many divergent forms of elemental life. He saw wood elves, gnomes, fairies, goblins, and even undines floating over the stream.

The clairvoyant lacked the ability to "feed" the fairies enough psychic energy to allow them to materialize, though. It appeared that Elsie and Frances were the only persons who had this strange ability.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle issued a summation of his interpretation and investigation of the phenomena in which he stated: I do not myself contend that the proof is as overwhelming as in the case of spiritualistic phenomena. . . . But that may also come and, for the present, while more evidence will be welcome, there is enough already convincing evidence available."

For centuries various individuals have felt that they have come up with "convincing evidence" that the Little People exist. Call them fairies, brownies, banshees, red ones, the good folk, or leprechauns, or personify them as

Puck, Robin Goodfellow, or Mab, persistent tales and an enormous library of folklore has been built around the stories of the Little Folk.

The fairies are said to enchant humans and take advantage of them; it is related that they can marry humans, or cast a spell on a likely lad or lass and have their way with them against the mortal's will; they seem to delight in kidnapping children and adults and whisking them off to the underground fairy kingdom.

On the other side of the coin, the story is told that fairies can materialize to help a farmer harvest his crop or help a housemaid clean up a kitchen; that they can guide humans with their ability to divine the future; that they stand by to assist at the birth of a favored child and tutor and protect him for the rest of his life.

It is interesting to consider that the same things said to be true of the Little People might also be said of the reported instances in which occupants of UFOs have involved themselves with *Homo sapiens*. The UFOnauts have been reported to hypnotize, or "enchant," men and women in order to make the Earthlings more malleable. There have been instances reported in which they have allegedly had sexual intercourse with Earthlings in what would appear to be an attempt to create a hybrid. There are numerous documented cases in which it seems that men, women, and children have been kidnapped and taken aboard UFOs. And the UFOnauts have been reported working closely with certain representatives of *Homo sapiens* throughout the years, aiding and advising them, and who knows, maybe in a less sophisticated time they even helped get in the crops.

Perhaps the most widely known bit of fairylore is the scene in which a farmer comes upon one or more of the Wee Folk digging in the earth. The farmer naturally surmises that the little one is burying his gold, so he snatches the fairy by the leg and forces him to tell of his treasure. This done, the farmer frees the sprite and marks the spot so that he will be able to find it again with little effort. By the time he returns with his implements, the spot has been altered or confused in some manner to make the excavation of the gold an impossible task.

This tale has been told with endless modifications and variations, but it remains essentially a story of a fairy outwitting an avaricious man. Less widely known are the many stories in which the man who discovers the fairies at their work is whisked away by them to the fairy kingdom, from which he may return much later as an old man who thinks that only a day has gone by, or from which he may never return.

Perhaps the "fairies" are not digging for gold at all. Perhaps the Little People are UFOnauts taking soil, mineral, and legume samples and do not wish their activities known.

Observe how the following account might have been told as a fairy tale if it had happened four hundred years ago.

On August 17, 1962, Rivalino da Silva, a miner from Diamantina, Brazil, came upon two strange little people approximately three feet tall digging a hole in the earth. Startled, the tiny men ran into the bushes at da Silva's sudden approach. While the amazed man stood rooted to the spot, a hat-shaped fiery object ascended into the sky.

Da Silva must have found it difficult to assess the bizarre scene that had just been played out for him. He went home that night, slept on it, probably tried to integrate the whole weird business into his experience. The next day, when he told his friends at the mine what he had seen, they laughed at him.

But shortly after dawn on August 20, his twelve-year-old son Raimunda was awakened by strange voices. He swore later that he heard them say, "Rivalino is in here. He must be destroyed."

Raimunda saw a shadow of something not quite like a human being, and only half as large, float, rather than walk, through his bedroom.

Then his father began to move as if entranced. He opened the front door and walked toward two large globes that hovered about six feet off the ground. The strange objects made a humming sound and blinked with an eerie kind of light.

Raimunda screamed at his father to come back, but the man continued to walk toward the mysterious floating objects. Before he could make a move to grab his father by the hand and shake him out of his strange trance, the globes had emitted a heavy, yellowish smoke that completely enveloped his father's form.

When the smoke cleared, the floating balls had disappeared—and so had Rivalino da Silva.

Raimunda and his two young brothers, Fatimo and Dirceu, ran to the police station crying and sobbing the unbelievable tale of their father's disappearance. The police began an immediate investigation.

At the da Silva home they found a strange, cleanly swept area in the dust about sixteen feet in diameter. They could find no sign of any footprints or tracks in the area. The officers did find a few drops of blood about 160 feet from the house, but even though laboratory analysis established the fact that the blood had come from a human, there was no way to determine whether or not it was da Silva's.

Police tried to break Raimunda's story and began to operate on the premise that the boy had murdered his father and had somehow hit upon an ingenious method of disposing of the corpse. At last they were convinced that the terrified twelve-year-old sincerely mourned his lost father and was psychologically incapable of murder.

Then a fisherman came up with a story that he had seen peculiar globes circling the da Silva home on the evening of August 19. Da Silva's miner friends reported his encounter with the little men. The case was officially closed as "unsolved."

Place this story in a different time and a different cultural context, and you have a fairy tale of a workman who came upon two Little Folk burying their gold. After failing to trick them into giving up their treasure, the man is whisked off to the fairy kingdom in a mysterious golden coach, never to be seen again.

Even the descriptions given by men and women who have observed UFOnauts matches those given of the fairy folk. We are not referring to the tiny six-inch-tall creatures with gossamer wings, but to the more common folklore fairy who stands between three feet and five feet tall, has large eyes, a pointed chin, and rather sharp features.

Almost as common in fairy folklore as confrontations with the Little People burying their gold, are the tales of fairy lovers who seem actively to lust after mortals. Such accounts are beginning to crop up more and more in the annals of UfOlogy. The following is a classic case of the genre:

On October 15, 1957, Antonio Villas Boas, a young farmer who lived near the town of Francisco de Sales in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, claimed to have been dragged aboard what appeared to be a machine shaped like a large elongated egg with three metal spurs in front. His abductors were about his height (approximately five feet, four inches tall) and once they had bullied him into the craft, they stripped him naked and poked and prodded him with needles and unidentifiable implements.

Then came the real surprise: He was shut into a room with a totally naked woman of the alien species. Antonio described her as having large blue eyes that seemed to slant outward, a straight nose, high cheekbones, a nearly lipless mouth, and a sharply pointed chin. The young woman was truly "hot stuff," because Antonio later came down with the symptoms of radiation poisoning.

Was the female a modern counterpart of the fairy lover? Set this account, which was thoroughly investigated by doctors, in an earlier time and what would we have? A young farmer, working in his field, is dragged off inside a fairy mound filled with lustrous shining lights, where the fairy queen, who had become enamored of him, makes him her husband. Then, after their honeymoon, when he commits some cloddish human act considered taboo by the fairies, he is once again returned to his farm and his oxen.

Could the romantic tales of dancing fairies and tiny royalty be ancient accounts of UFOnauts as interpreted by the storytellers of long ago in the jargon of their own time? Could the fairies be elemental entities who have always existed and functioned on earth, coexisting with *Homo sapiens,* intermingling with him in thousands of subtle ways? Is "fairy land" but another way of saying "spirit world"? A solid kernel of reality may lie at the core of centuries of myth and legend.

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